SUNDAY

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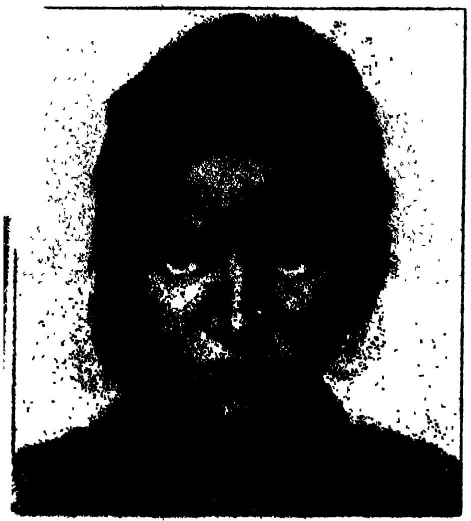
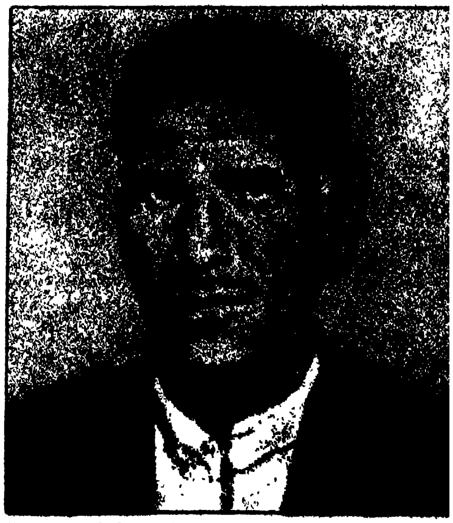


UP's Fascinating Dacoit Queen Phoolan Devi

Picture Not Available

Chambal's "Emperor" Malkhan Singh, the Robin Hood of the '80s



Pan Singh Tomar, who once represented India in the Asian Games

How these three have become terrors and legends

EXCLUSIVE EXTRACT FROM THE FIFTH HORSEMAN

By Collins and Lapierre, authors of Freedom at Midnight

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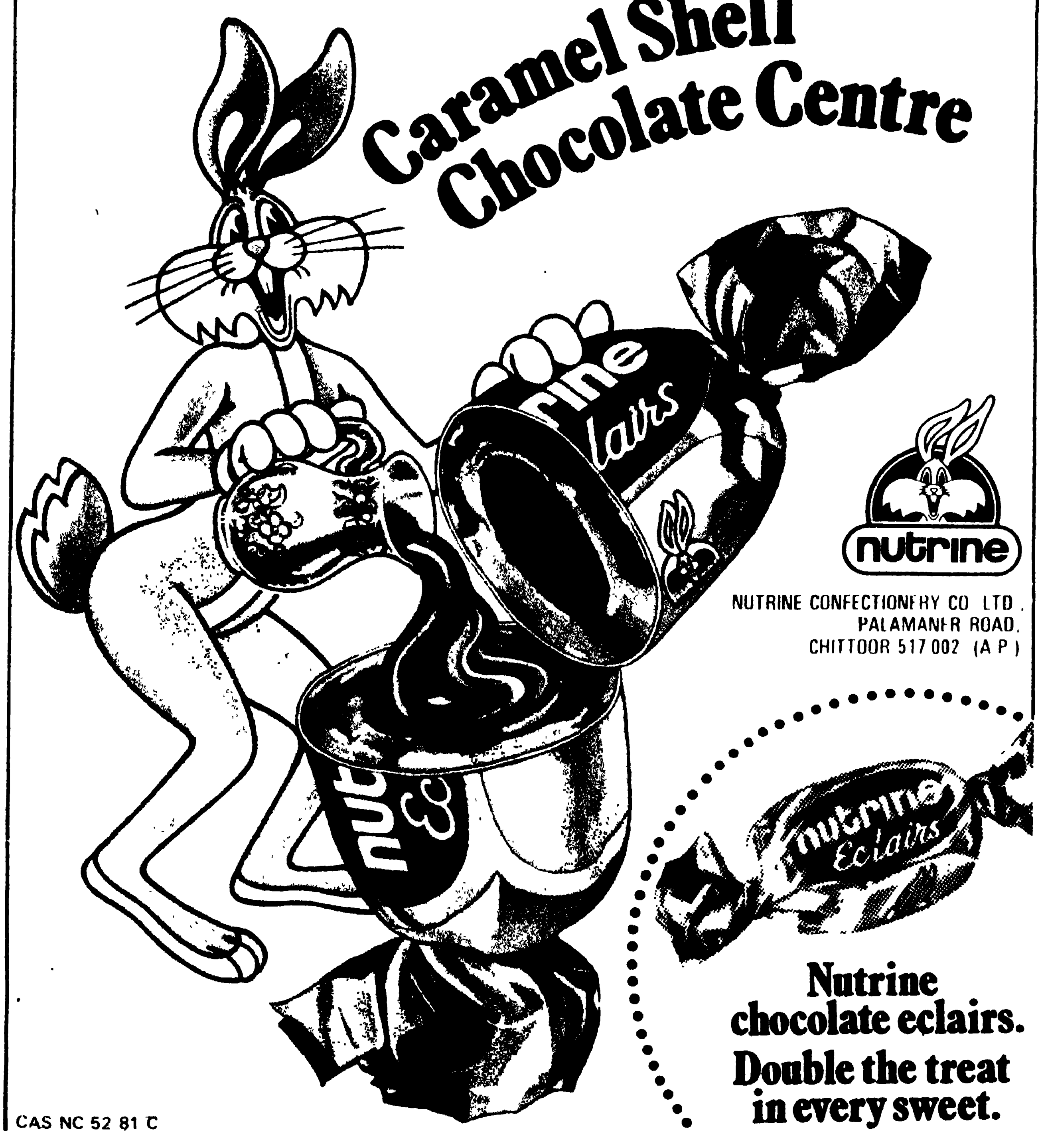

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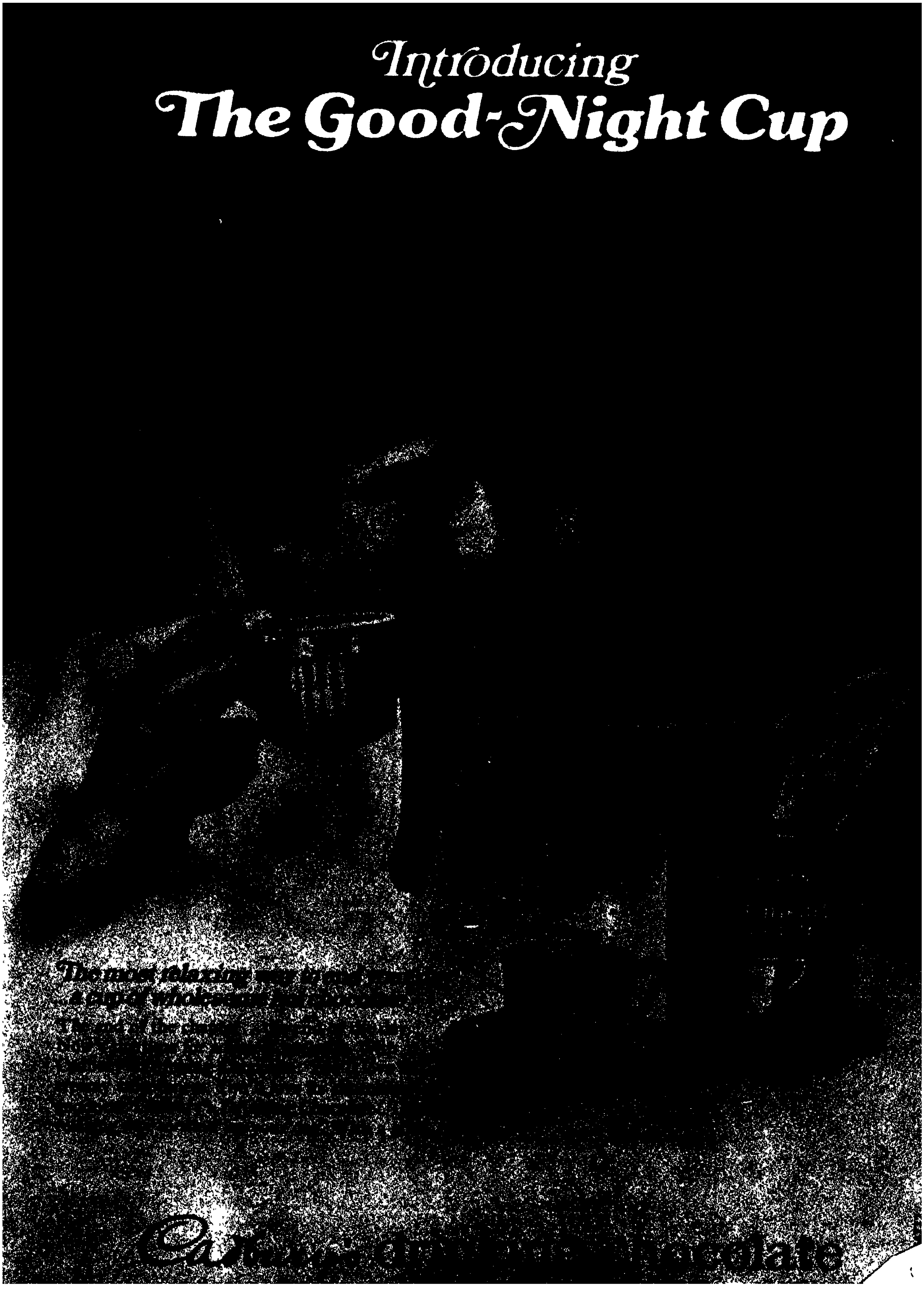

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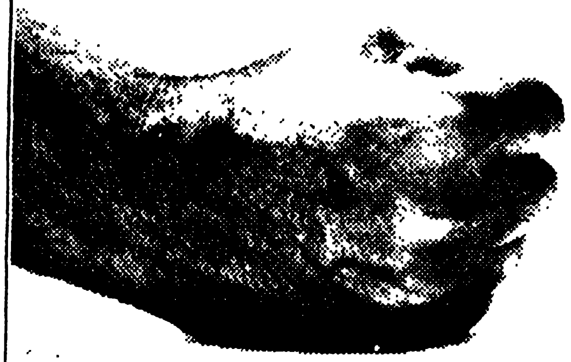

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SUNDAY VOLUME 8
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March 15, 1981

In the ravines of Chambal and the desolate areas of UP, dacoits still rule the roost, spreading terror and paradoxically, becoming legends to the poor who see them as success stories rather than brigands. Our correspondents went into these remote areas on the trail of the big three: Malkhan Singh, Phoolan Devi and Pan Singh Tomar. A detailed story of how they are challenging the forces of law. **Page 12**

The threat of a nuclear holocaust hangs over New York: If the Israelis do not surrender occupied Arab territories within 36 hours, then the city will be destroyed by a thermonuclear blast. This deadly ultimatum, served by Colonel Kadhafi of Libya, forms the central theme of the exciting, new work of political fiction, *The Fifth Horseman*, by the famous duo Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre. We publish this week the first of two exclusive extracts. **Page 36**

Beethoven, the great composer, was a "man's man," a confirmed homosexual, and not the romantic bachelor his countless admirers thought him to be. Kishore Chatterjee re-examines the maestro's personality in the light of recent research. **Page 50**

The racism of the British members of *Gandhi's* unit has threatened to bring the shooting of the film to a standstill. The Indians have nicknamed Indo-British Films the new East India Company. **Page 42**

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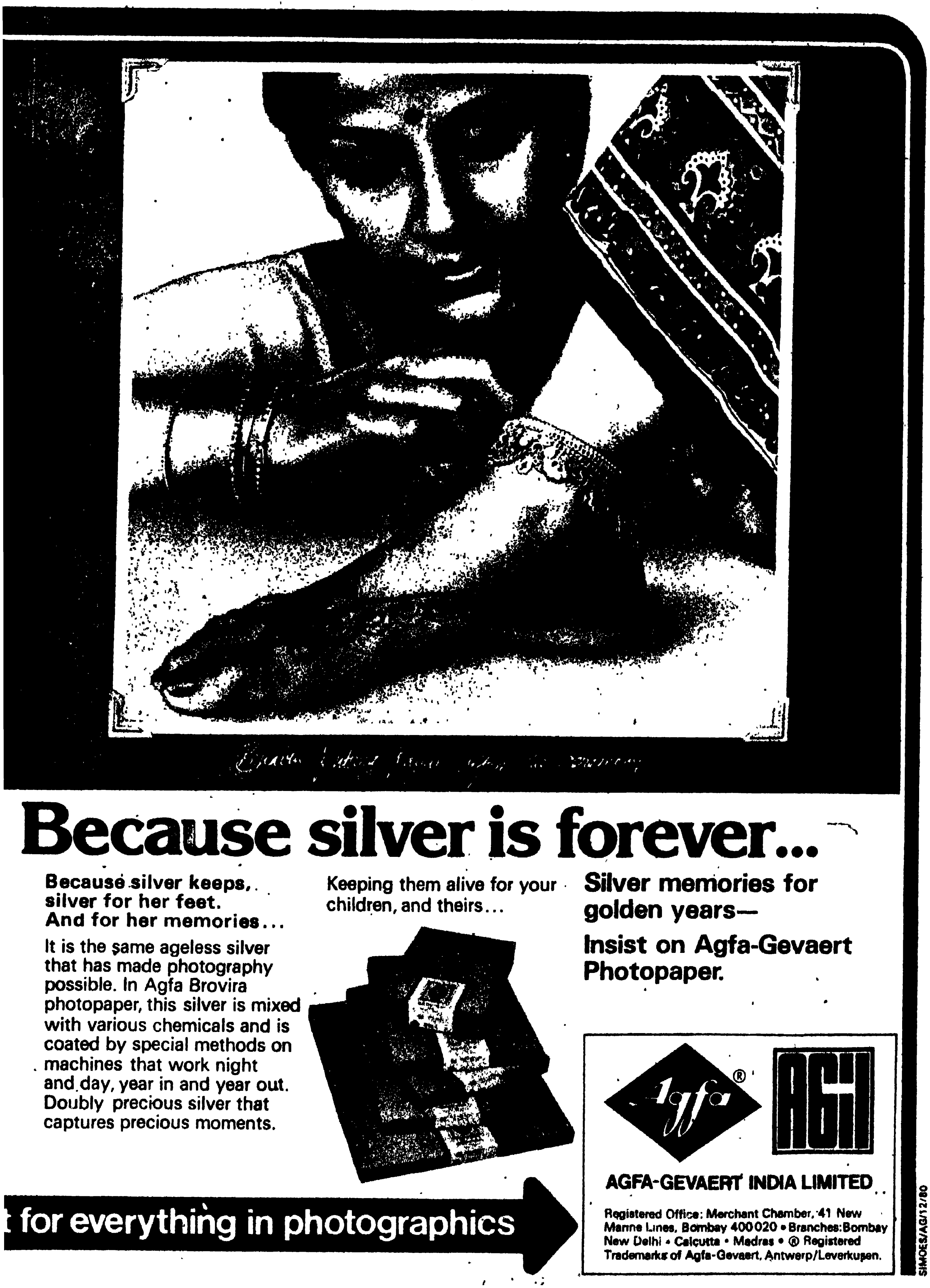

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The Government

"Burning Train" burnt trains

It now turns out that the government, or the railways (which is a government department) partially subsidised the multi-starrer, big budget film called *The Burning Train*, which was released and which promptly flopped last year. The filmmakers took the help of the railways to shoot some of their scenes and they lived up to their name: three railway coaches were damaged during the shooting of the film. The railways say that no new coaches were made available to the filmmakers, and that only old coaches from workshops were loaned to the producer.

The details of the damage: Coach number 6133 had its inside panels charred and burnt. One compartment of coach number 6148 was burnt; and the electrical wiring and discoloured panels needed to be replaced. Signs of fire were visible along the entire length of one side of coach number 2804A. The inside panels, insulation between panels and the tops of three windows were damaged, as were pillars and beams.

President has not passed West Bengal bills

Legislation passed by the Vidhan Sabhas is sometimes kept waiting, by the centre, 12 years for the President's assent! This is another manifestation of the power that the central government enjoys over the state. The state suffers even more if it is ruled by a party other than the ruling party at the centre. This has been the experience of the CPI(M)-dominated Left Front in West Bengal. As many as five bills passed by the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha sent up by the state government for presidential assent are pending in New Delhi.

The West Bengal Restoration of Alienated Land (Amendment) Bill, 1980, received by Delhi on 30 September 1980 is held up because the ministry of rural reconstruction has asked for some clarifications. The clarifications were received on 25 February, and now the matter is "being considered further."

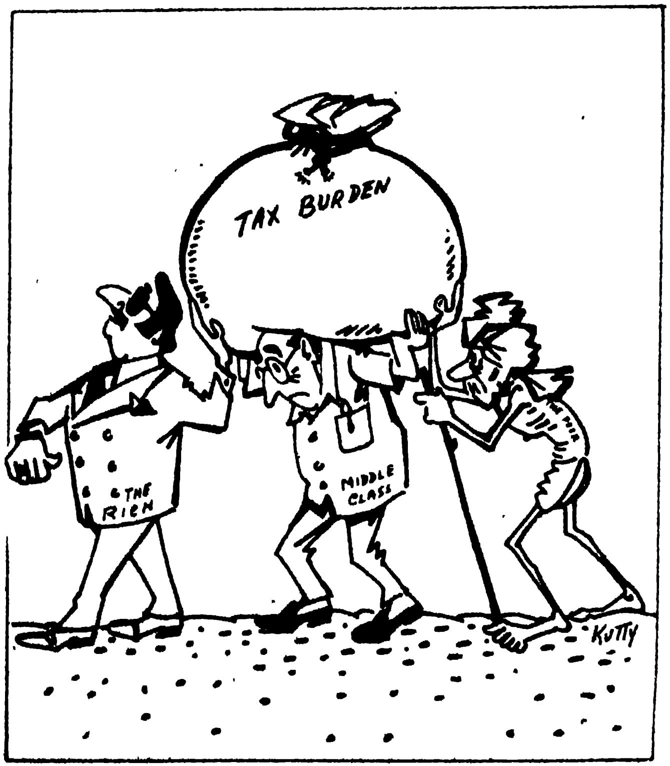
The Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Second Amendment) Bill, 1980, is held up for the same reasons, as are two other bills. But the longest delay has been with the Trade Union (West Bengal Amendment) Bill, 1969—we repeat, 1969. Leftists may come to power, but they have to hang around a long while even to make marginal dents in the system.

An artificial sugar scarcity

Last year there was a genuine sugar scarcity in the country but this year's scarcity is largely the result of the government's inept handling of the allocation and distribution of the commodity. The government's declared policy is to encourage new and expanding sugar factories by allocating to them extra free sale sugar from the sales proceeds of which they can partly finance their expansion plans. But in the last three months the government has allocated about 70,000 tonnes of levy sugar to the new and expanding units, most of which are in the cooperative sector. This has resulted in a shortage of sugar available for release through the public distribution system. In several parts of the country people get their sugar from ration shops every fortnight instead of every week. To make amends for this the government has banned the export of sugar. But the STC is already committed to reexport to a London firm 180,000 tonnes of sugar that it had imported last year. This sugar will have to come from somewhere, be it from the free sale or the levy stocks. Fortunately, for the time being at least, the STC will not export the 50,000 tonnes of levy sugar that it was alloted because of the export ban. Another reason for pockets of sugar scarcity in the country is the reported unavailability of railway wagons to ship sugar from factories to consuming centres. Due to the piecemeal allocation of wagons, about 200,000 tonnes of sugar is lying with the factories when they should have been with the fair price shops for distribution to the public.

Commerce vs industry

Yet another proposal of the commerce ministry to bring down production costs and raise exports is being thwarted by the directorate-general of technical development (DGTD) of the industries ministry. The commerce ministry wants exporters to be allowed to import second-hand machinery under open general licence (OGL). This will require an amendment of the import policy for 1980-81. Currently the import of second-hand machinery is allowed only on merit after a competent chartered engineer abroad has certified the remaining life and utility of the machinery. The commerce ministry argues that misuse of the proposed facility, feared by the industries ministry, can be prevented by introducing new deterrents. The import of second-hand machinery at cheaper prices will reduce production costs and save valuable foreign exchange. The proposal, if implemented, will be able to take quick advantage of the current move by Japan to get out of textile exports as a result of which a lot of textile machinery there has become available at bargain prices. But the inter-ministerial wrangle is standing in the way.



Tantra and Freud

If Samaresh Bose's *The tantrik quest* (25 January-1 February) is analysed from the Freudian point of view, several *tantrik* practices would no longer appear to be gimmicks or a mystery. Both *kundalini* and *swayambhulinga* represent what is said to be "sexuality" in the Freudian conception, with all its vicissitudes. Both are asleep, meaning that both are the functions of the unconscious mind. Whatever is understood by arousal of sex through biological performance, it is quite different from what takes place in the unconscious. Although Otto Fenichel, through psychoanalytic processes, established a psycho-biological correlate that male sexuality means "a desire to fill in the tube by entire penetration of penis upto the root (active)"; and female sexuality is the reverse desire "to be filling up the tube in entirety (passive)." He further posited that this desire has a physiological correlate (*susumna*) lying at the base of the penis/clitoris (the rudimentary penis). So we can infer that if *kundalini*—the source of *mahashakti*—can be aroused by any means, the genital member of the body has to be brought into operation.

Every psycho-biological organism is endowed with bisexual (masculine-feminine ar active-passive) wishes. For example, when one is hearing something, he or she is in a passive (feminine) state, wishing to fill up the tube; and when the same person is delivering a talk, he or she is in the active (masculine) state of filling in the tube. The concept of bisexuality is accepted in Hinduism as *Hara-Parvati* or *ardhanariswar.*

Every child experiences the first touch of the female genital during birth and according to psychoanalyst Nador, the male child is horrified at the largeness of the mother's genital. This has a relation with the male child's sufferance from the Oedipus complex and fear, which is more severe than that of the female child.

Susumna, passing through the four other stations, finally leading to *paramshiva* or *chidananda* (complete satiation), cannot be ordinarily resolved because of bisexual conflict. *Chidananda* can hardly be attained because it is impossible to know during coitus whether the male is desiring the female's pleasure or the reverse.

Thus it appears there is a subtle similarity between the "sex" conceived in the *tantrik* cult and Freudian sexuality. Since Freud was a clinician his major emphasis was on sexuality and mental illness. What is found in *tantrik* practices is overt activation involving the sacrifice of goats, blood, vermilion skulls and wine. These are all awe-inspiring objects; *mantras* are chanted to allay the fear they generate. But what happens if a *tantrik* fails in the process?

A psychoanalyst, Calcutta

Whatever the *tantrik* quest is, history shows it to be a result of foreign invasion. Drawn by the pleasant monastic life in this land, the Aryan invaders forgot their battle cry and took to occultism.

Deepak Pawar, Bombay

The secret *tantrik sadhana,* leading ultimately to spiritual enlightenment, is fantastic and unbelievable. It is only those who have faith in the process who can understand it; non-believers have no right to comment on it.

Joy Kumar Santra, 24 Parganas

Tantra and *kundalini* have become the subject of controversy. Efforts are on to prove and explain *kundalini* scientifically and accurately. The word *tantra* means continuity—the continuity of development along a certain path, the continuity of the life experience. Since this spiritual path is not fun, the quest is either started and completed or not started at all; if one begins and quits, the thought of the unfinished task haunts one for ever. Practising *tantra* and awakening of the *kundalini* are a very specialised method of self-realisation which can only be attained after long and intense practice.

Many people are under the notion that *tantra* is a rather "loose" philosophy that accepts whatever you wish to do, so long as you do it with the "right attitude"—and progress twoards spiritual awakening. But if we study *tantra* as it has been traditionally practised, we find that it is a highly evolved science. The *tantrik* tradition has made unparalleled contributions to understanding and mastering the finer forces of nature and attaining the most advanced states of consciousness. Swami Ajaya alias Allan Weinstick, Ph. D., had written in a book named *Kundalini, Evolution and Enlightenment:* "*Tantra* is a very practical science for systematically understanding and mastering the forces of the universe and travelling through the subtlest realms of existence to the very source of consciousness itself."

Nowadays there are many cheap editions of books supposedly on *tantra* and *tantrik* sex. *Tantra* is related with sex, but not sexual passion. Sex is regarded as a source of energy. In his *Neo Tantra* Acharya Rajneesh says: "*Tantra* has been the ony tradition that has accepted sex totally. Don't condemn the mud because the lotus is hidden in the mud; use the mud to produce the lotus. *Tantra* says, if sex is so vital that life comes out of it, then there must be something more to it. That something more is the key towards divinity..."

Probal Sanatani, Kanpur

What Mr Bose wrote is only a crude interpretation of *tantra.* He did not mention the real significance of Shiva, shakti, Kali and Kali's garland of skulls; without understanding these one cannot grasp the true meaning of *tantra.* The process of transforming animality or latent divinity into supreme divinity is known as *tantra sadhana;* it involves liberation from bondage. Mr Bose should probe the divine aspect of *tantra.*

S. Anand, Jodhpur

According to the *tantrik* Pranatosh Baba the five activities essential for achieving "total spiritual bliss" are drinking wine, eating meat and fish, money and sex. But it is only the rich who can indulge in these activities, so "total spiritual bliss" can never be attained by the vast majority of ordinary people.

A. H. Khan, Bilaspur

Mr Bose would have done well to omit portions of his narrative that described a so-called *tantrik's* exhibition of something resembling the Indian rope trick with his organ. Apart from the repulsive and nauseating picture, which many will not believe is true, this is hardly *tantra.* About 30 years ago a friend told me about something similar he had seen in a Paris night club.

D. Gossain, Calcutta

The "penis incident" which Mr Bose narrated can be classified under *yoga. Tantra* and *yoga* are quite different. The author's contention that without *yoga tantra* is impossible is contradicted by what happens during Kali *puja.* Mr Bose was himself witness to a "Kali *puja* in the *tantrik* tradition" among the Santhals. Were all the Santhal villagers who performed the *puja yogis? Yoga* is meant to keep the body and mind in good health; it is a cure for some diseases (like asthma).

Anand R. Deshpande, Solapur

The author made two mistakes: first, he failed to define properly such terms as *tantrik, yogi, bhairava, hathayogi, sanyasi* and *paramhansa;* secondly, he ought to have met other famous *tantriks* too to get an overall idea of the science and how it is practised. I know of two popular centres of *tantrik* worship in Calcutta. Thousands flock to two *tantrik sadhus* to get cured of diseases. Among their disciples are former chief justices of the High Court, ministers and police commissioners.

B. N. Mitra, Calcutta

Shia-Sunni fight

S.Kalbe Jawad, president of the Ali Congress, says in his letter *(Opinion*, 25 January) that Shias never abuse other sects and condemn Yazid, who according to Mr Jawad, was the murderer of Hazrat Husain. It is well-known that the accusations of Lucknow's Shias are directed at the first three caliphs of Islam, namely Hazrat Abubakr, Hazrat Umar and Hazrat Usman and Hazrat Aisha, the wife of the Prophet and daughter of the first caliph. The abuses are recited in public, and include vulgarities. This is the main point of dispute between the Shias and Sunnis.

Mr Jawad says that around 1905 a new sect emerged who called themselves Yazidis. There is no such sect and even if there are a few individuals who call themselves Yazidis, they are a microscopic minority. The Sunnis of Lucknow are, as a whole, against *tabarra*, which, in simple language means downright abuse, and involves vulgarities. Sunnis also demand the fundamental right of praising the caliphs.
Athar Husain Qurashi, Lucknow

Any religious controversy resulting in violence and hatred between two fraternal sections of the same community is most unseemly, to put it mildly. Both sections must share the blame for their disgraceful "annual battles." How is it that Lucknow alone carries the stigma of large-scale killing, arson and looting among the two sections—that too confined only to the old city? There are many educated and sensible people in both sections who could sit together and resolve the dispute. But it is the leaders on both sides who have a vested interest in the continuing outbursts of violence. I accept Mr Jawad's contention that "Shias never abuse other sects during and after the Moharram processions." But does this mean Shias do abuse others before the procession and that Sunnis abuse all the time? I do not agree with Mr Jawad's explanation of *tabarra* as "hatred for the enemies of Islam." I believe its meaning is closer to passive dissociation.

Faizabad and Jaunpur in UP and Madras in the south have substantial Muslim populations of both Shias and Sunnis; both sections have been living peacefully together for centuries. In Iran too there are excellent relations between Shias and Sunnis. Can't the people of Lucknow learn a lesson from them? I am reminded of what Iqbal has said in *Jawabe Shikwa: "Eik hi saab ka nabi, Deen bhi, Iman bhi eik; Harme pak bi Allah bhi Koran bhi eik; Kya barhi baat thi hote Mussalman bhi eik?* (All Muslims follow the same Prophet, profess the same faith, bow in the direction of the same Ka'aba, worship the same Allah and recite the same Koran. Cannot all Muslims be one too?)"
Hashmatullah, Lucknow

The government had banned both Shia and Sunni processions because they always caused tension. Despite the ban, on 13 December, the Ali Congress took out the so-called silent procession which was an obvious provocation to the government and the Sunnis. Every action has a reaction. In 1969 and 1974 the Shias launched an attack on Sunnis. They went on the rampage, with killings and arson. Ever since then, Sunnis have harboured a grudge against Shias. Today their anti-Shia feelings are so strong, even their leaders fail to pacify them. The only solution now lies in upholding the ban on Shia and Sunni processions.
Shahabuddin, Lucknow

Modest, graceful

I was surprised by *Wary about the sari (The world*, 25 January). Considering the worldwide appeal of the sari, one can easily conclude that it is preferred for the modesty and grace it endows upon the wearer. The allegation of people that the sari reveals the body's contours and is therefore immodest is absurd. Is not then a trimly-cut *salwar-kameez* revealing enough too? The sari keeps the body wholly covered, from neck to toe. The little that it leaves incovered can easily be covered by wearing a longer blouse.
Manju Bal. Ranchi

Optimism, for once

Your inaugural *Goodnews* page (25 January) said it loud and clear: not all is gloom. Congratulations for being optimistic.
Jose, Hyderabad

Thank you for the new page. Having got used to reading only bad news, we were beginning to forget that there still are some good things happening.
Subir K. Bhattacharjee, Calcutta

Goodnews is a welcome glimmer of hope
Mankumar Sen, Calcutta

The problem

S. P. Sagar's *Why did 18-year-old Lal Bahadur Rai die?* (25 January) about the tragic incident of police firing at Samastipur Jail is a sad reflection on the prison administration. Evidently, the rule of law is being replaced by the law of the jungle. Far from a solution to our law and order problems, the prison has become a problem itself. To quote a Supreme Court pronouncement, "In the eye of law prisoners are persons and not animals...When a prison is traumatized, the Constitution suffers a shock."
Niresh Bagchi, Dibrugarh

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

Changed signs

A curious change has overcome *Sundayweek*. For instance, according to the earlier horoscope the sign Aries was for those with birthdays from 21 March to 20 April. Mr Amritlal, the new fortuneteller, has changed Aries to 15 April to 14 May. Those whose Zodiac sign was Aries have now changed to Pisces.
Y. Mukhtar Basha, Madras

Amritlal is going by the Indian system; earlier we followed the international system.—Editor

The dead Presidents

Reagan becomes sheriff of America (16 November) reminded me that for more than a century now, every American President who has been elected to office in a year divisible by four, has died in harness: Harrison (1840), Lincoln (1860), Garfield (1800), McKinley (1900), Harding (1920), Roosevelt (1940), and Kennedy (1960). Better luck for Reagan (1980), we hope.
D. R. D. Choudhuri, Silchar

Bold hero

This refers to *Gundu Rao weeds out his agriculture minister* (25 January). Indira Gandhi had chosen S. Bangarappa as the president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (I)at the time of the 1979 Karnataka Congress(I) split because only a bold hero of the backwards could stand up against the might of Devaraj Urs. Now Bangarappa is gone; Mrs Gandhi will not tolerate any intelligent person or socialist in her party. She belives in appointing sycophants to important posts.
Perooru Joru, Bangalore

Which distinction?

It remains to be seen whether, by the end of the cricket season, that controversial umpire Mr Rex Whitehead enlists himself for the 'Gallantry Award for 1981' along with you or prefers to remain "Rex Whitehead of the year."
Sudhish Nayar, Kanpur

Wrong name

You seem to have renamed Manju Bhargavi the well-known Telugu actress of *Shankarabharanam* fame Manju B. Hargavi (*Khaas Baat*, 11 January)
M. B. Eswaraiah, Bangalore

Brute force

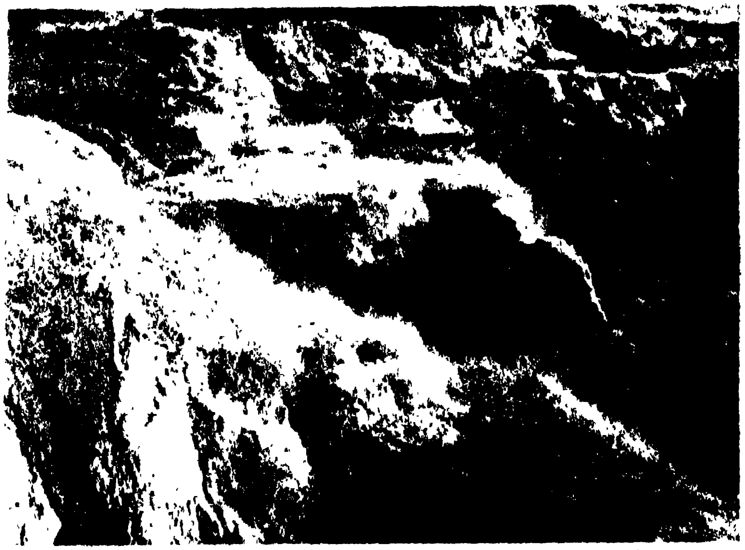
Judging by *The child-baiters of Orissa* (18 January,) Orissa's policemen appear no better than the policemen of Bhagalpur. It is strange that the police entered a school campus without permission and beat up students mercilessly. The government should take drastic action to check police misdeeds.
Pijush Kanti Chandra, Kharagpur

Last letter

In effect, what Mrs Gandhi told the [illegible] was: "Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday—but never jam today."
C. P. M. Namboodiry, Varanasi

Rs 50 for the last letter

THE THREE MOST DREADED DACOITS IN INDIA



DHARM VIR JAYNER

Ravines of Chambal

We went to the ravines of Chambal and desolate stretches of U.P. (where dacoit queen Phoolan Devi, clad in jeans and armed with a sten gun, reigns) to bring you this in-depth report on how these three have become both terrors and legends.

An artist's conception, based on descriptions by people who have seen her, of what Phoolan Devi looks like.

Dacoit queen Putlibai being worshipped in a poor household

DHARM VIR JAYNER

Pan Singh Tomar's picture was obtained from police files.

Phoolan Devi: Queen of Dacoits

She wears jeans. She carries a sten gun, which she can use with great accuracy and without any mercy. She belongs to a backward caste, and she hates the upper caste thakurs because they have oppressed her and her community. She has been abducted and raped repeatedly by two thakur gangleaders who killed her lover to get her. She became a dacoit after she was spurned by her husband and spat on by society. Today, she is the most powerful, the most wanted dacoit in Uttar Pradesh. And she will have her revenge, on both the thakurs and society.

On 14 February she led her gang of backward caste dacoits to the thakur village of Behmai in UP and shot dead all those who had abetted in her capture and rape. And laughing with the pride of a woman who has taken her revenge, taunting the police to capture her, she left. The UP police have mounted a massive hunt for her, but the only casualty, till the moment of writing, has been the chief of UP police, Mahendra Singh, who has had to be removed because of his failure to get Phoolan Devi. SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA went out into the desolate ravines between the Ganga and the Jamuna, where Phoolan Devi operates, to find out the fascinating story

13 AUGUST 1980: Vikram Mallah, the leading dacoit operating in Etawah, Jalaun, Kanpur and Hamirpur districts of UP is shot dead while asleep under a *babul* tree with his uncle Barelal at Baijamau village in Kanpur district. The police take the credit for the "encounter", but local villagers know that Vikram Mallah was slain by his former colleagues, Lalaram Singh and Sriram Singh, who had fallen out with Vikram over the attentions of Phoolan Devi, Vikram's mistress. After killing Vikram, the Singh brothers kidnap Phoolan and take her by boat to Behmai, a thakur-dominated hamlet on the banks of the Yamuna. During her captivity at Behmai, Phoolan is repeatedly raped by the two Singh brothers. One night Phoolan is taken to a well outside the house of the village *pradhan*, Taqdir Singh, and made to draw water out of the well throughout the night. On the fourth day, her captors finally take pity on her tears and set her free. Phoolan returns to her father's home in Gorhapurwa, Jalaun district, across the Yamuna and plans out her strategy of revenge.

14 February, 1981: The villagers of Behmai see Phoolan after a lapse of five months. But it is no more the helpless Phoolan they had seen in August. This time Phoolan is wearing a police uniform and along with her are 25 armed men, belonging to the gangs of Ram Autar Mallah, Balwan Gadaria, Man Singh Yadav, Raghunath Mallah and the supreme leader of all these gangs, "Baba" Mustaquim (though Mustaquim himself was not present). Phoolan has come to Behmai with two motives—one, she has information that Lalaram and Sriram are hiding in the village and, two, to take revenge not only on the Singh brothers but also the thakurs of Behmai, who had abetted the Singh brothers during the four days when Phoolan was humiliated in the village. She does not get the Singh brothers (who were a few kilometres away at that time, in Damanpur village), but picks out the sturdy thakurs of the village, makes them march out of Behmai in single file, takes them to a mud wall outside the village and with a burst of carbine fire puts 20 of them to death.

Behmai, which does not figure in any of the maps available with the district authorities of Kanpur (perhaps because it has a miniscule population of 450, or because it is so deep in the Yamuna ravines that the survey teams have never ventured there), hits the headlines not only in the national but the international press also. Teams of reporters are sent out by London and Paris-based newspapers to cover the single-largest massacre by dacoits in India. The state administration is jolted into activity. The incident severely damages the prestige of the local thakurs and costs the inspector-general of UP police, Mahendra Singh, who has survived the Narainpur and Moradabad disturbances, his job.

TO the north-east of Kanpur district flows the Ganga and to its southwest the Yamuna is flanked by ravines. The Yamuna ravines of Kanpur district along with Banda, Hamirpur, Etah, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Etawah Agra and Jalaun districts, are the stomping ground of dacoits. This area of UP adjoins the Chambal ravines which in turn form the natural boundary between UP and Madhya Pradesh The topography of the region is favourable to the dacoits and inhospitable to the police. Villages are not linked by road and the only communication channel to the hamlets on the banks and the Yamuna are dusty bullock-cart tracks which wind their way across the ravines and *arhar* fields. The soil here is treacherous—the black alluvial soil of the Yamuna ravines becomes slippery after the rains. Only jeeps can negotiate these dust tracks, that too driving at a maximum speed of 15 kmph. The track which dips suddenly is too narrow at most places to allow a bullock cart and a jeep to pass each other. One has to make way for the other. To reach Behmai, 14 km of such tracks have to be traversed after leaving the main road at Rajpur. In such terrain the police do not have enough jeeps to fight the dacoit menace and often have to move on foot. The dacoits of this region also move on foot, unlike the horse-riding dacoits in films, but naturally they are more fleet footed. Of the 19 police stations under the SP (rural area) of Kanpur, only five have jeeps. Of the six circle officers in Kanpur (rural area) only four have vehicles. So, along with the SP's personal vehicle, the entire district police in the rural area have just ten vehicles!

Jalaun district is no different Phoolan Devi was born in the house of Devidin Kewat sometime in 1957 at Gorhapurwa village under the Kalpi police station of the district. Gorhapurwa is situated at the junction of Yamuna and its tributary None. Devidin is a poor farmer, owning only two bighas of land. The family has five daughters and a son. Phoolan is the second daughter, her elder sister, Rukmani, is married to Rampal and stays with her husband at Budhadana, near Auraiya, the headquaters of Jalaun. Her 13-year-old brother, Shivnarain, stays with Rukmani at Budhadana and studies in the seventh class. Phoolan's younger sister, Ramkali (16) is married to Babu Mallah of Tyoga village, across the river, in Bhognipur police circle of Kanpur. Phoolan's mother stays with her husband at Gorhapurwa along with her two younger daughters, the youngest being four years old. Two bighas of land cannot feed a family. So the father works as a partime mason and the mother and the younger sisters twine ropes to earn money for subsistence.

Phoolan (24) was an ordinary village girl till a few years back. Married at the age of ten to Puttilal of Maheshpur, she found it difficult to get along with her husband who was ten years

The *Sholay* effect?

HARISH KAPOOR

Underground tunnel in a house in Gorhapurwa used by dacoits

The police officers dealing with the anti-dacoity operations in UP blame the censors for passing certain shots in the multi-starrer *Sholay*, first screened in 1975, which they feel inspired the dacoits to run amuck. The film had a sequence in which the dacoits killed the members of a family, while the head of the family—their real enemy—was away. The sequence was pictured in all its gruesome detail with slow-motion shots lingering over each individual killing. In most of the mass killings by dacoits in UP in recent years, it was the family or friends of the man against whom the dacoits sought revenge, who were killed while he was away.

Mohan Das Menon, who has dealt with the problem of dacoity for the past few years during his postings at Morena (Madhya Pradesh), Agra and Kanpur (he has been the SP in charge of anti-dacoity operations, based in Agra for some time and has now been given concurrent charge as SP, Kanpur (rural area), told me that in three cases, while interrogating arrested dacoits, he was told that they had been influenced by this shot. One dacoit told Menon during interrogation:. "*Neta kahte the abto* Sholay *jaisa badla lenge*. (The leader of the gang said that now we would take revenge in the Sholay style)."

Menon said that Behmai was just the continuation of a series of mass killings by dacoits in the past few years, though the number killed at Behmai was the highest. He listed some of the earlier mass murders: 12 were killed by the Geetam gang in early 1979, Chhabiram's gang killed all members of the family of one Badshah in Shahjehanpur (Badshah had some litigation with Chhabiram's family; he is still alive), and last year 12 of a family were liquidated by Vaidyaram's gang in Agra. The main enemy of the gang in this case too survived.

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her senior. This was Puttilal's second marriage. Phoolan's father had married her off on the condition that her *gohona* (a custom prevalent among villagers in UP and Bihar under which the bride stays with her father for some time after marriage till the bridegroom pays a dowry in order to claim her) would be after three years, as she was sickly then. But within three months of her marriage Puttilal insisted that she be sent to Maheshpur as he needed someone to do the cooking. After her marriage Phoolan was seldom allowed to visit her father's home. Once when she learnt that her mother was ill and her huband refused to let her go to Gorhapurwa, she ran away to her parental village. Puttilal came within a few days and insisted on getting his dowry back, an indication that he wanted a divorce. He refused to take Phoolan back. Puttilal soon remarried.

Phoolan's parents wanted her also to remarry, but she insisted on going back to her husband's home. She ran away from her village when she was pressurised to remarry. The village elders held a panchayat and it was decided that she be kept in the house of her father's elder brother, Gurudayal Kewat, where she stayed for four months. Gurudayal's son, Maiyadin, insisted on her being sent back to Puttilal's home and he took her to Maheshpur and left her there. The story thereafter is a familiar one. The *sautan* (Puttilal's new wife) illtreated Pholan and her husband and her in-laws encouraged this. She was often beaten up. One day Puttilal took Phoolan back to Gorhapurwa and when Maiyadin refused to let her enter her uncle's home, Puttilal left her on the doorsteps and went away.

Meanwhile, a dispute had arisen between Phoolan's father and her uncle over ancestral property. Gurudayal had duped his younger brother in a land deal. As a result, he had 40 bighas of land while Devidin had two. Phoolan took up the cudgels and fought the case on behalf of her father before the village panchayat. But she lost.

Phoolan, by then, had blossomed into a 16-year-old attractive village belle. Sensing the potentialities of Phoolan, who could be a formidable opponent, Maiyadin started scheming against her. To begin with, he floated rumours about her character and alleged that she had incestuous relations with another cousin, Indrajit. Hearing all this, the son of the village sarpanch, Sokchand, one day tried to take liberties with her. She slapped him and he in turn beat her up with his shoes, all in full public view.

Unhappy with the life in her village, Phoolan crossed the Yamuna and went away to a cousin's home in Tyoga in Kanpur district. It was at Tyoga that she first came in close contact with dacoits. There she met Kailash, who was also a mallah by caste. Kailash was an associate of Vikram Mallah. According to one version, Kailash took Phoolan away to Kanpur city and married her in court. Whatever be the history of her relationship with Kailash, it was through Kailash that she met Vikram Mallah. (According to the information available with the police, she met Vikram through one Mataprasad, who used to frequent her village. Mataprasad was married to a girl in Gohani, Vikram's village, and that is how he knew Vikram. But the other version, culled during this correspondent's visit to Gorhapurwa, seems more authentic. Moreover, the police records do not have the entire story of how she became a dacoit.)

Vikram Mallah, who became a terror in the Yamuna ravines, was initially a petty thief who used to act as an informer of Lalaram Singh and Sriram Singh's gang. Once when the Singh brothers were sent to jail, Vikram joined their gang and in course of time emerged as the *sardar*. He ruled the gang till he was slain by the Singh brothers on 13 August last year. It is not known when Phoolan first committed a robbery, but according to police records, it was a dacoity in her cousin Maiyadin's house in Gorhapurwa sometime in 1978. In the first information report lodged with the Kalpi police station, Maiyadin recorded Phoolan's name as one of those who committed the dacoity. The police records show that she had no criminal record before the dacoity in Maiyadin's house. Could it be possible that an act of revenge by Maiyadin, who had been scheming against Phoolan for some time in the past since the land dispute, brought Vikram Mallah's mistress into the crime records?

ON January 1979 some goods looted from Maiyadin's house were recovered from Phoolan and she was arrested and taken to Kalpi police station. She was tried by a court in Auraiya and convicted. She had to remain in jail for only 20 days before she was bailed out by two thakurs of Narihan village, Narain Singh and Jaikaran Singh, who were the employers of her father, Devidin. Interestingly, though Pholan was kept in custody at Kalpi police station for three days and at Auraiya jail for 20 days, she was not photographed. Perhaps the police never realised that they had a potential 10,000 rupee award-carrying criminal in their custody. This is an example of the laxity of the police machinery in the dacoit-infested areas. After all, when someone is arrested on charges of either possessing goods stolen by dacoits or for harbouring dacoits, the person must be suspected to have links with dacoits. Had the Jalaun police photographed her in 1979, then today half of their problems would have been solved. At present the police have to rely only on descriptions of Phoolan given by the villagers and the policemen who had seen her at the Kalpi police station and Auraiya jail.

According to the description available with the police, Phoolan has a wheatish complexion, a round face with pimple marks, is of medium height and strong build, has masculine hands and feet and "average" eyes, nose and ears. Such a description does not get anyone very far. When the Kanpur daily, *Aaj* published a photograph of Phoolan's younger sister, Ramkali, the police constable at Kalpi who had seen Phoolan, said that Ramkali bore a striking resemblance to her dacoit-sister.

Release on bail did not solve Phoolan's problems. The two thakurs of Narihan took full advantage of her helplessness and perhaps this sowed the seeds of hatred towards thakurs in Phoolan's heart. The feeling was further reinforced by Vikram's death and the treatment she received at the hands of the Behmai thakurs in August last year. Phoolan ran away from Narihan and returned to Gorhapurwa. While her second husband, Kailash, could not save her from humiliation at the hands of the Narihan thakurs, he introduced Phoolan to Babu Gujar, a dreaded dacoit senior to Vikram Mallah. While she was in Gorhapurwa, Phoolan attended many court hearings of her case at Auraiya, where she used to go along with her brother. One day Babu Gujar, along with Vikram, came to Gorhapurwa and took Phoolan

A legend called Phoolan

Phoolan's mother Moola and younger sister Munni outside their house in Gorhapurwa

"IT seems that Gorhapurwa will slowly become a tourist attraction," said Dhruv Lal Yadav, station officer of the Kalpi police station in Jalaun district, when I asked him the way to Phoolan's village which comes under his jurisdiction. "Your car cannot go there, so come with me, I have to go for a round of that area," said Yadav. So off we went, in his jeep, to the village which has produced the woman whom the entire state administration of UP is looking for.

We drove for a short distance along the Kalpi-Jhansi road, a state highway, and turned right to another metalled road, which goes to Madaripur. At Harraipur, after having driven five km on the Madaripur road, we branched off to a dusty road which became a bullock-cart track after we passed the PAC outpost at Mangraul. The jeep drove at precarious angles down the dust track, which could hardly take its full width. Three km down this dust track, and we came upon a fair-sized village, Gorhapurwa.

My mission was to meet Phoolan's family. A few days earlier her sister and mother had spoken to a correspondent of *Aaj* and also allowed themselves to be photographed. But my luck was not so good. Apparently, taken aback by the front-page publicity given by *Aaj* that morning (23 February), the two women had left the village. The husband of Phoolan's younger sister, Ramkali, had come from across the river to take her away. Only Phoolan's two youngest sisters, aged around eight and four, were in the house, which overlooks the confluence of the None and the Yamuna, which form the western and northern boundaries, respectively, of the village.

Phoolan's house is fascinating. As you enter through the front verandah you reach a room that opens into a courtyard which is a few feet higher than the level of the room. The courtyard leads to another room, a few feet higher again, which opens into yet another courtyard, which is at a still higher plane than the room. There is a rear exit from this courtyard, by which you can disappear into the house behind. Dhruv Lal Yadav told me that most houses in the villages in the ravines were like this. Therefore, if the villagers were harbouring dacoits, it became extremely difficult for the police to track them down because by the time information reached the police the gang moved from one house to another and disappeared.

From the backyard of Phoolan's house you can have a clear view of the entire riverfront and the ravines. This could be an ideal observation post for the dacoits, Yadav pointed out.

When the *Aaj* correspondent spoke to the family a few days ago, he asked Phoolan's mother, Moola, whether her daughter visited her sometimes. Moola replied: "*Kabahun nahin awat hai. Wa khooni hai Hamen wake paisaki jaroorat nahin hai* (She never comes. She is a murderer. We do not need her money).

When the correspondent asked 16-year-old Ramkali as to how Phoolan had become a murderer, she snapped back: "*Aaj hamahun laike chalau, kh.o wao piwao, goli chalibo sikhab* of *hamahun khooni ban jaihen* olan's you take me along, give me .hing to food and drinks, teach me hov gun, I too will become a maughter of Perhaps that partly explinly become a nomenon called Phoo

A boon to Youth Congress(I)

The Behmai incident has been a godsend for the Youth Congress(I) unit in UP, led by Sanjay Singh, MLA, to snipe at the government. Sanjay Singh, who is the son-in-law of the brother of Chief Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, had been ignored by the state leadership for some time after the death of Sanjay Gandhi Being the son of the raja of Amethi, the constituency of Sanjay Gandhi, Sanjay Singh had enjoyed top patronage during Sanjay Gandhi's lifetime He, therefore, lost no time in attacking the state government after the Behmai massacre and demanded the sacking of the IGP, Mahendra Singh. A day later Mahendra Singh was removed from the post of IGP.

That was not all On 25 February, when the Chief Minister went to Bhognipur to condole the death of inspector Moolchand, who had died in an encounter, Sanjay Singh was visiting Behmai along with Kanpur MLA Bhoodhar Mishra and YC(I) leader Jagadambika Pal. He had visited Bhognipur hours before the CM's arrival and held a meeting with the new IGP, N. K. Verma, at the Bhognipur inspection bungalow.

At Behmai Sanjay Singh offered to pay for five guns to be given to those whom the police approved. This was a thoughtful gesture. For, in Behmai, the thakurs are not so poor as to accept the *dhotis* and blankets which are being offered by the government What they need is guns, and anybody prepared to give this wins their heart.

AJAY KUMAR COURTESY AAJ

Phoolan's younger sister Ramkali who is said to resemble Phoolan

away There are two versions of the reaction of her family to this incident. According to one, the family heaved a sign of relief, as a married daughter staying away from her in-laws is always a liability in villages According to the other version, when Phoolan's mother went to the Kalpi thana to lodge a complaint of kidnapping, she was ignored Whatever be the truth, in the eyes of the law, Phoolan had jumped bail and had become an absconder

Babu Gujar proved to be another 'ormentor for Phoolan A senior police ficer told me that in all likelihood lan's heart turned to stone after as sociation with Babu Gujar, who ing. often rape her in front of the seldonng members This, in fact, home. C be the undoing of Babu mother waise of such abominable 'ram, then a junior gang, started to hate Babu Gujar. On 20 July, 1979, Vikram killed Babu Gujar at a Kali tample four km from Auraiya in a gun duel. Thereafter, Phoolan had an uninterrupted affair with Vikram till the latter's death on 13 August, 1980. Vikram taught Phoolan the use of firearms and she started accompanying him on his raids, donning a police uniform.

Lalaram Singh and Sriram Singh were released from jail in June 1980. They bore a grudge against Vikram Mallah because during their period of captivity he had taken over the leadership of the gang. Moreover, they coveted Phoolan, who refused to even look at them because she was the *sardar's* mistress.

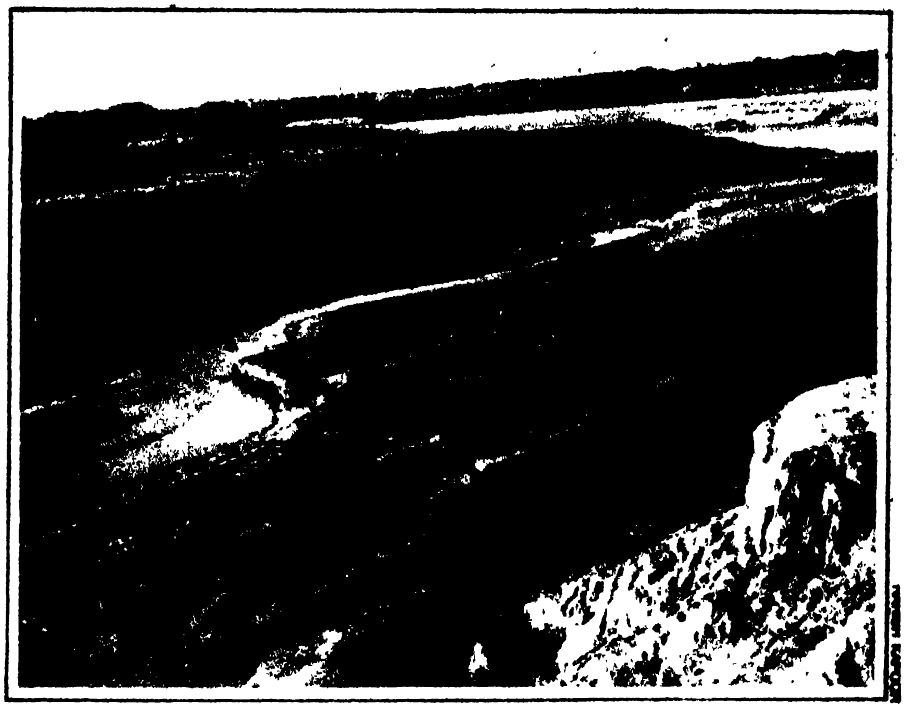
After Vikram's death and Phoolan's humiliation at the hands of the Singh brothers, she returned to Gorhapurwa and established contact with Vikram's gang member, Mansingh Yadav. She committed a number of dacoities along with Mansingh, including road holdups One striking feature of the raids conducted by Phoolan's gang throughout has been mass killings In fact, the people of Behmai should not have been taken by surprise at all—in December 1980 Phoolan had gone to Baijamau, the place where Vikram was slain, and looted 90 houses as an act of revenge Behmai was sure to be her target one day and she struck on 14 February 1981 after she had managed to line up the gangs of Ram Autar, Balwan Garadia, Raghunath Mallah and Jagram Chamar and obtain the blessings of "Baba" Mustaquim.

There are two other "dacoit beauties," besides Phoolan, who are operating in the Yamuna ravines—Kusuma Nain (belonging to the barber caste), who is the mistress of the two Singh brothers, Lalaram and Sriram,

Heads roll in the police

"Narainpur and Moradabad he survived, but Behmai was the undoing of IGP Mahendra Singh," a senior journalist of Lucknow said when N. K. Verma was made the new IGP. Mahendra Singh was kicked up to the newly created post of director-general of police, where he can remain a sleeping member of the police setup till his retirement in 1982. That was not the only change in the higher echelons of the UP police. Alok B. Lal, a young IPS officer who was the SP (rural area) of Kanpur, was transferred, and Mohan Das Menon, the SP (anti-dacoity operations) was given concurrent charge of the post of SP (rural areas) of Kanpur. But while Mahendra Singh's departure had been demanded by politicians of all hues for some time, the way in which Alok Lal was removed smacked of political arbitrariness.

Alok Lal was on leave in Lucknow on 14 February when he learnt about the Behmai massacre. He immediately rushed back to Kanpur and took charge of the situation. During his absence the duties of the SP (RA) were being discharged by the SSP of Kanpur, Bijay Nath Singh, who had earlier been the SP of Moradabad (during the August 1980 riots). But the reward Alok Lal got for cancelling his leave and rushing back was to be summarily transferred on 22 February He was with the IGP and the home minister, Rajendra Tripathi, from 8 am to 6.30 pm that day. But they never told him anything. Only at night was he served with his transfer orders.



Confluence of the Yamuna and None rivers at Gorhapurwa

and Meera Thakur, who was the mistress of Balwan Garadia, the dacoit who was killed in an encounter on 24 February. What were these two women doing when Phoolan was slaying the thakurs of Gorhapurwa? While Meera Thakur was with the gang of Phoolan (though not present on the scene), Kusuma Nain was with her own gang at Damanpur, within a few km of Behmai, where she had taken her lovers, Lalaram and Sriram, to settle an old land dispute.

Some 12 years back Shivnarain Nai of Damanpur had sold a plot of land to Bishwambher Thakur, who had taken possession of the land and not paid the full amount. Kusuma Nain prevailed upon the Singh brothers to mediate in the dispute and get a fair deal for Shivnarain Nai. It was because of this that Lalaram and Sriram Singh were at Damanpur (a few km from Behmai) on 14 February. Phoolan may have thought that they would be at Behmai instead. Therefore, she struck with the force of the combined gang.

As the news of the Behmai incident reached the Singh brothers at Damanpur, they rushed to challenge Phoolan's fleeting gang and engaged it at Chholapur, in between Behmai and Khojarampur. The gang of the thakurs is said to have even sought the help of the PAC outfit posted at Khojarampur (only three km from Behmai), by shouting over a megaphone that they were Lalaram and Sriram and they wanted the help of the PAC in fighting Phoolan's gang. But the PAC men did not react. According to the villagers, when one resident of Behmai, Balmukand, reached the PAC outpost at Khojarampur, he found that the PAC jawans were busy playing volleyball and they refused to listen to him. The police deny this. They say that the PAC had taken immediate action But the fact remains that the PAC unit at Khojarampur did not manage to challenge Phoolan's fleeing gang. This task was ironically left to another dacoit gang.

Phoolan's gang crossed the Yamuna at Zari to go to Mukdalan, which is situated across the None river opposite Gorhapurwa. Dhruv Lal Yadav, the station officer of Kalpi police station, was at that time visiting the Mangraul PAC outpost, near Gorhapurwa. He heard a gun shot, apparently fired by the gang to inform the villagers of Gorhapurwa that they were around and food be sent to them. Dhruv Lal Yadav took one section of the PAC and three civilian constables and crossed the None river in neck deep water to reach Mukdalan and challenged the gang. There was a brief battle, but the gang managed to escape through the *arhar* fields. They, however, left behind looted goods. It was through the looted goods that the police later realised that the gang challenged by Dhruv Lal Yadav was none other than the one which had committed the Behmai massacre.

Here again the shortcomings of the police become apparent. The crime having been committed in Kanpur district, it took some time for the information to reach the Kalpi police in Jalaun district. It was only a matter of chance that SO Dhruv Lal Yadav was at Mangraul and he took the initiative to challenge the dacoits. Yadav told me that the police would perhaps never get such a golden opportunity again. All the top dacoits of various gangs were operating in the same area along with their most valuable members on the night of 14-15 February when they were challenged at Mukdalan. Yadav, who has a reputation of being a brave officer (and he proved it on 24 February in the encounter with Balwan Gadaria when he killed him), remorsefully told me that if only he knew the nature of the gang he was engaging, he would have gone with more troops. The encounter at Mukdalan was the last time the police came in contact with Phoolan. Till 26 February, the day I left Kalpi after spending a few days at the anti-dacoity operations control headquarters in the hope that Phoolan would be nabbed, she had managed to elude the lawmen, though the police said that they were tracking her movements across the ravines closely and were confident of nabbing her within a few days. The police strategy, in her case, seems to be to arrest and try her instead of killing her in an encounter. Phoolan's being a woman may have something to do with this.

Whatever it be, the daughter of Devidin Kewat has certainly become a legend.

"Emperor" Malkhan Singh

He has his own imported, inflatable boat which he uses to cross the many rivers of the ravines. He does not eat food cooked by anyone else for fear he may be poisoned. He shifts camp after every meal. On an average night he might walk as much as 40 kilometres. He loves his growing reputation of the Robin Hood of the 1980s: he steals from the rich, and gives a little bit away to the poor.

He is more respected by the people than feared. He started his life as a *baghi* (rebel) more than four years ago, and in this time he has become the most powerful dacoit in the fearsome ravines of the Chambal. The price on his head is the highest for any outlaw today: Rs 70,000. His name is "Emperor" Malkhan.

SAUMITRA BANERJEE went through forgotten dirttracks in the interior of the Chambal region to ferret out the history of this legend.

IT was 9 January 1981. Word had just reached the superintendent of police of Madhya Pradesh's Datia district that one of the most wanted dacoits of Chambal was hiding in the nearby Jignia forest of Gwalior district. He promptly informed his counterpart in Gwalior: the two moved in with their forces. By 11.30 they had encircled the jungle. Suddenly a shot rang out: the dacoits had spotted the police. The battle lasted for an hour—but the dacoits were never really in trouble. Their guns were better: their armoury included even such sophisticated weapons as sten guns and self-loading rifles (SLRs). Secondly, they had the strategic advantage of height; they were on top of a hillock. Within an hour, the 70-strong gang had escaped the police net and was on its way to the forests of Ratangarh and Chitaipali. The police had anticipated such a line of retreat, and lain an ambush on the route. But the dacoits managed to clear this ambush easily enough: by two thirty in the afternoon they had disappeared. All that the police could capture was some utensils and stray clothes.

The police did not want utensils and clothes; they wanted Malkhan Singh, the "Emperor of *Baghis* (Rebels)"—as the dacoits are called in Madhya Pradesh. He was the most-wanted *baghi*, with a reward of Rs 70,000 on his head, currently the highest reward being offered for an outlaw. The police have still not managed to catch Malkhan Singh.

In his region, Malkhan Singh is a kind of an emperor. He is fond of his Robin Hood image, and he does help those among the poor who he wants to help. He travels, like other dacoits, mainly on foot (the dacoit on horseback lives only in Hindi films), but he has his own personal inflatable boat (imported) to help him cross the rivers which he often has to traverse in order to keep a step ahead of the law. He moves freely enough among the villages, where he is, in fact, more respected than feared. He does not normally kill or loot, preferring to make his money by kidnapping the offspring of rich fathers. And he is generous in the manner of a benevolent feudal.

But he was born poor, in 1943, to a *mirdha* family in Belao village of the dacoit-infested Bhind district. He did manage to study till class three in the village *pathshala*, but spent most of his time grazing his few cattle in the ravines of the river Baisli which flows beside his village. These ravines were frequented by dacoits, and this was where he first came into contact with them—particularly a dacoit called Girdvalia who, like Malkhan, was also a *mirdha* by caste; indeed, he was a distant relative. Malkhan was an errand boy for the dacoits then: he would fetch cigarettes, matches and other small items of need from the village shop and pass them on to the outlaws. His rewards were generally lavish tips, but a young boy might be excused for feeling a romantic thrill at the association with dacoits. The dacoits got to know him, and trust him.

But Malkhan Singh stayed away from police records—until 1970. He was arrested for shooting down a man in his village, Kallu, over a petty dispute. A case under section 302 of the IPC was started; the sessions court of Bhind gave him life imprisonment. Malkhan Singh appealed to the Gwalior high court, which let him free on a bail of Rs 10,000, in 1971. This was also the year that Malkhan Singh was elected a member of the village *panch*. But the *sarpanch*, Kailash Narain, was an old enemy: the two had always been in opposite camps—for instance when Narain joined the Congress, Malkhan Singh became a supporter of the other strong political party in his area, the Socialist Party.

Malkhan Singh was convinced that it was Kailash Narain who had tried his level best to get him convicted in the Kallu murder case. And one wonders if Malkhan Singh was too far from the truth: all those who gave evidence against Malkhan Singh were close to Kailash Narain. This was not all. In 1973, a friend of Malkhan Singh, Jagannath, was murdered. Two people were arrested: Harilal and Mansukh, both harijans—and both supporters of Kailash Narain.

However Malkhan Singh still did not react, until provoked by two incidents in quick succession. First, towards the end of 1975, Kailash Narain tried to get Malkhan Singh removed from the *panch* on the grounds that he had still not been cleared of murder by the courts; a resolution to this effect was introduced by Narain. Around the same time, Nathuram, a close relative of Kailash Narain, eloped with a lady from Malkhan Singh's family. This Malkhan Singh took as a personal affront. He reported this to the police, but nothing happened. Malkhan Singh decided to take the law into his own hands.

Around 10.30 on the morning of 5 May 1976, Kailash Narain was sitting outside the house of Ram Saran in his village, chatting. Malkhan Singh, armed with a sten gun, approached, and from a distance of about 20 feet let loose a volley of bullets. The first bullet hit Kailash Narain on his arm, and as he fell forward, the rest of the bullets hit Sudama Singh, who was sitting next to Kailash Narain. Sudama Singh died on the spot. Kailash Narain, it so happened, survived.

Malkhan Singh knew precisely what his future was going to be after this shooting. He did not hang around waiting for the police. He took his gun, and made his way straight to the ravines of the famous Chambal river. He had now become a *baghi*, a rebel from the world of "law and order."

Along with Malkhan Singh left Ram Sunehri and his brother Ram Karan Singh. And once in the ravines, Ghanshyam (alias Ghansa) joined them. In a

-ram, then a junior
gang, started to hate
gang member, Mansingh

couple of months the gang took shape; today it is the most feared gang of the Chambal.

Kailash Narain had survived Malkhan Singh's attack, so the first priority of the gang became the murder of Narain. Narain took precautions, however, always moving around with armed guards; armed policemen were posted at his house. Malkhan Singh waited. He had, in the meanwhile, another score to settle too: to take revenge for the murder of his friend Jagannath. But the two harijans who had killed Jagannath were in police custody, so he decided to kill those close to them. On the night of 7-8 October 1976 Malkhan Singh, along with Ghanshyam, Ram Sunehri and Ram Singh entered the village of Mankabagh under the cover of darkness. Gangole and Mewaram were resting in their houses. They were dragged out and shot dead. Malkhan Singh and his gang disappeared as quietly as they had come. They did not trouble or harass anyone else.

It is now four years since he became a dacoit, and Malkhan Singh has raised his strength from a band of four to a small army of 70. His area of operation is around the *panchnada*, where the five rivers—Chambal, Jamuna, Kuanri, Sindh and Pahoj—intersect on the border of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and where the ravines are deepest and the jungles most dense: it is from here that Malkhan Singh conducts all his operations, sometimes slipping into the Agra and Etawah districts of UP and sometimes into the Bharatpur district of Rajasthan to either commit his crimes, escape the police or meet villagers.

Within the very first year, Malkhan Singh was able to establish four separate gangs owing allegiance to him, one of which he controlled directly; the other three were in the charge of his three closest lieutenants, Ghanshyam, Mustaqim (who also figures in the Phoolan Devi story, since he helped her assault the thakur village of Behmai) and Soghar Singh. Recently, Mustaqim and Ghanshyam broke away to become completely independent. (According to a report published on 4 March, Mustaqim was shot dead by the police during their intensive hunt for dacoits after the Phoolan Devi incident. But one should wait for further confirmation before accepting that as the full truth. The police often, and for understandable reasons, make mistakes in identification after an encounter with dacoits.)

Malkhan Singh, who operates mainly in Bhind, Gwalior, Morena and Datia, has what might even be called a good reputation among the people: the Robin Hood syndrome once again. There are some reasons for this. To begin with, he does not indulge in wanton murder. At best, during the four years, he has committed 20 murders—a relatively small figure compared to the 400 or more murders that a reformed dacoit like Mohar Singh is

Where do dacoits get their weapons from?

HARSH KAPOOR

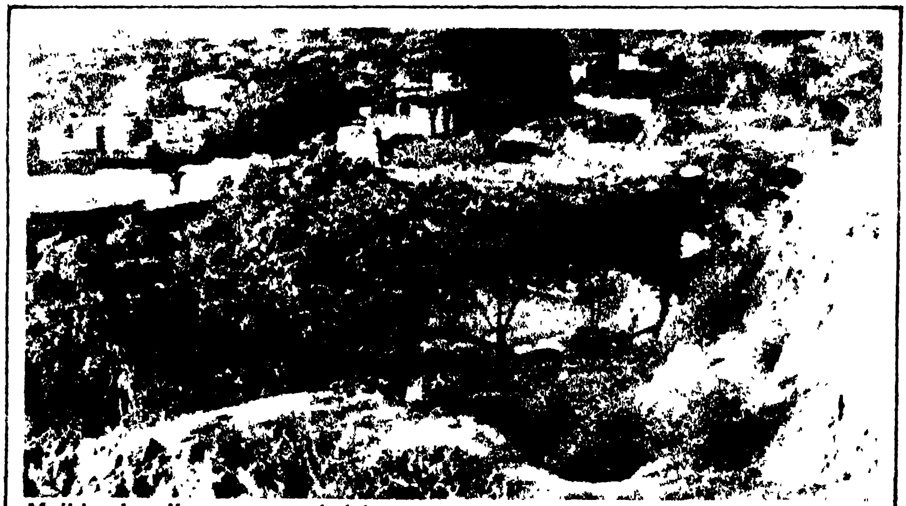
The arms that the dacoits use are often far more sophisticated than those of the police. After one recent encounter, for instance, the police found that the cartridges the dacoits had used had been manufactured more recently than those used by the police. Besides, it is common to find dacoits like Malkhan Singh and members of his gang using weapons like Self Loading Rifles (SLR), Thompson Machine Carbines (TMC) and Mausers, which gives them a clear upper hand against the police. Malkhan Singh, interestingly, has managed to lay his hands on hand grenades as well.

The sources are many. After the 1972 surrender, though 511 dacoits surrendered, only 267 arms were turned in to the police. It is common knowledge that most of the leading dacoits had more than one weapon per member of the gang. What in effect happened at the time of the 1977 surrender was that the dacoits either sold off their weapons to those who did not surrender or a majority of them kept their weapons with trusted people—in case they were ever needed again.

The Indian army had issued, periodically, some weapons to the residents of villages on the Indo-Pak border, especially during war time, to guard themselves. A number of such weapons have found their way into the ravines of central India. Then there are the legally licensed arms. In Morena and Bhind districts, for instance a large number of villagers have been issued licensed arms; these instead of being used against dacoits are often sold to them. In the districts of Gwalior, Morena and Bhind there are about three lakh licensed arms in circulation—besides a horde of unlicensed ones.

But the main sources of sophisticated weapons are usually the ordnance depots of the army. Arms abandoned by the army especially during the Indo-Pak and Indo-China wars were sold through often to the dacoit gangs. An SLR lost during the 1971 war was found with Mohar Singh within three months of its being reported missing. Besides, gunrunning is a very lucrative profession for people living in the border areas. Weapons are smuggled in from Pakistan and China and then sold to agents who in turn sell the weapons to the dacoits at steep prices. (A .303 bore rifle, for example, can fetch Rs 15,000.) Said surrendered dacoit Lukka (Lokman) Singh: "From Morena and Bhind for instance, there are a number of people in the army. These people have very good contacts with the people in the ordnance depots. When they come home on holiday they bring along with them guns and cartridges which they sell and make some money. This is one important source for *baghis.*" Recently, Braj Mohan Singh, an army *jawan* posted at Banina, near Jhansi, was arrested in Gwalior and the police recovered 350 SLR cartridges from him.

Besides, of course, there is a proliferation of countrymade guns—popularly known as *katta.* Dacoits who cannot lay their hands on sophisticated weapons make do with kattas, mostly manufactured in the districts Jhansi, Gwalior and Agra.



Malkhan's village surrounded by ravines

DHARM VIR JAYNER

alleged to have committed. This the police accept too. And his main source of income is not through loot, where the chances of the poor being partially affected exist. His main income is from kidnapping, and he gets an average ransom of Rs 50,000. Now, there is no point in kidnapping a poor man's child, and obviously he doesn't. So the poor, who are not affected by his dacoity but are often the beneficiaries of his generosity, talk warmly of him. The police know of at least 28 kidnappings committed by Malkhan Singh, which would mean a minimum revenue of about Rs 14 lakhs for the gang so far. As far as the distribution of the loot is concerned, Malkhan Singh takes half, then expenses for the upkeep of the gang are deducted, and the rest is divided among the members, the importance and share of each member being determined by the quality of the weapon that a particular gang member possesses.

Revenge is the source, and revenge continues to be the inspiration: however successful Malkhan Singh may have become, he never forgot that he took to this life of crime because of a man called Kailash Narain. And revenge had to be taken. Malkhan Singh realised that he himself had now become too big a target, the police everywhere were on the lookout for him, he would be spotted easily. So he would get someone else to do the job for him. It was planned that Kashiram, an ordinary and unknown member of his gang, would go to Kailash Narain and shoot him when he was least suspicious—in the open.

On 14 September *sarpanch* Kailash Narain was at his house in Bhind city. In the evening, he went that day for his prayers to the Shankar temple, as was his practice. After prayers, Narain went into a shop. The armed escort who always accompanied him relaxed, and went to another shop to buy some tobacco. This was the moment that Kashiram had been looking for. He crept up from behind and shot Kailash Narain with a countrymade revolver. Kashiram was caught, but this time Kailash Narain did not survive. And Malkhan Singh said thank you to Kashiram in his own way. A week after Kashiram was arrested, Malkhan Singh raided Kashiram's village and killed four of Kashiram's worst enemies.

Life as a dacoit is hardly all fun and games. It means being hounded by the police day and night; it means guarding against an attack from any quarter—including from gang members. For instance, Malkhan never sleeps the full night in any one place. He moves camp after every meal He

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What do ex-dacoits do?

DHARM VIR JAYNER

Mohar Singh and Saumitra Banerjee

What are the two most notorious ex-dacoits doing today? Mohar Singh once had a reward of Rs 2.5 lakhs on his head; he has now taken to farming and politics. He campaigned actively for the Congress(I) in the last Assembly elections. As he told this correspondent, "There is no other alternative to Mrs Gandhi and, now that I have surrendered, I will work for her party. In the next Lok Sabha elections if Charan Singh stands from Baghpat, I will contest against him on the Congress(I) ticket. I know I will get the ticket. There must be someone to protect the rights of the *gujjars* in that area. Charan Singh's supporters harass them. I think ex-dacoits have a very good chance of doing well in politics. After all, they have a very heroic image. I will definitely take to politics seriously."

But stranger is the story of Madho Singh. From being a dacoit who had a reward of Rs. 1.5 lakhs on his head, he has now become a magician. And he made his maiden public appearance recently at a fair held in Gwalior on 25 December. He was a huge success too, largely because of the advance publicity he had received. In almost all the daily papers of Gwalior, advertisements had appeared that ex-dacoit Madho Singh would give a magic show. It read: "Good news: There is no need to wait any longer. Yesterday's dacoit has become today's Great Magician Madho Singh...Yes, Sir, the same Madho Singh on whose head there was a reward of Rs 1.5 lakhs. Yes, these days he is acting as the hero of three films; he is a person about whom thousands of authors have written books." A neighbour of Madho Singh in Gopalpura, Morena, had a wry comment: "We do not see him practising magic very much, but people all over Madhya Pradesh know that he has become a magician. Let us hope that all the existing dacoits do not become magicians, then the police will really have a difficult time finding them!"

DHARM VIR JAYNER

Malkhan Singh's house

never eats food cooked by anyone else. He does not drink, not because he has anything against liquor but because he is afraid of losing his alertness under alcohol's influence. Two sentries are always on guard about two kilometres away from where he sleeps, and they are changed every two hours. All the dacoities that they commit are done before midnight so that the gang has a clear three to four hours to make a getaway. On an average Malkhan Singh travels 40 kilometres every night, dressed in the now conventional garb of a dacoit—a police officer's uniform. Malkhan Singh, however, never misbehaves with women, nor does he allow anyone in his gang to do so—indeed, he has quite a few admirers among women.

Nor is the admiration confined to women. When we visited Malkhan Singh's village, Belao, we asked a boy where Malkhan Singh once lived. "Malkhan Singh *jo baghi ban gaye the?* (Malkhan Singh, who has become rebel?)" replied the boy. The admiration in his voice was unmistakable. Malkhan Singh's house is now deserted. His family members have left, afraid that someone might want to take revenge on Malkhan Singh by hurting them. A couple of policemen are posted there; an unimagintative administrative gesture. The walls are crumbling, and dust has gathered; shrubs have begun sprouting in corners.

We met Bhoop Singh, who stays just a couple of houses away. He eyed us with suspicion: were we policemen in plain clothes? Once he realised we were journalists, he did not stop talking. "We never had any complaints against Malkhan Singh. He mixed freely and never troubled anyone. He was also fond of singing. Had Kailash Narain not got him implicated in a case, and had not Nathuram taken a woman away from his family, he would still be here with us. We actually want him to come back to the village, we want him to surrender and lead a peaceful life."

But Malkhan Singh is not willing to surrender—not yet. Last year, the authorities tried to use the influence of ex-dacoit Mohar Singh to persuade some of the current dacoit chiefs to surrender. Mohar Singh once had a reward of Rs 2.5 lakhs on his head, and he was a feared terror. Malkhan Singh told Mohar Singh to stay away: he would only begin to think of surrendering, said Malkhan Singh, when he achieved another distinction—when the reward on his head became Rs 2.5 lakhs too. At the moment the reward is Rs 70,000—the highest for any outlaw, but still far away from Rs 2.5 lakhs. How much more time will Malkhan Singh need to get there?

A kidnap victim's tale

Ram Behari Sharma, who was kidnapped by dacoit Babu Khan and his gang, narrates his harrowing experience in captivity.

"I come from a well-to-do brahmin family. My father is a farmer and I am a B. Com. student. At around four o'clock on 30 September last year, while I was returning from Bhind town to Bathura, I came across some people in police uniform. They called me. Thinking they were policemen I went to them. Immediately they tied my hands and took me with them to the ravines at the point of a gun. There they blindfolded me. All along the way they abused me and pushed me around. Then, we stopped at a spot and they untied me. But I was not left alone. Three people were constantly guarding me, and I was kept at a distance from the rest of the gang, so that I could not hear anything that they were saying.

"All through I did not know what they were going to do with me. Occasionally I used to weep. But everytime I did so I was beaten up. After a couple of days I stopped crying. But they gave me proper food and shelter. Rarely did a night pass when we stayed at one place. We crossed from one ravine to another.

"After some time I gave up all hopes of being freed and I even thought that I would be killed. But suddenly one day I was released. It was then that I came to know what had been happening during my captivity. The dacoits had approached my father and told him that he had to pay a ransom of Rs 25,000 for my release. After that a number of meetings had taken place between my father and the dacoits. And finally, only when my father managed to collect and pay the entire amount, was I freed."

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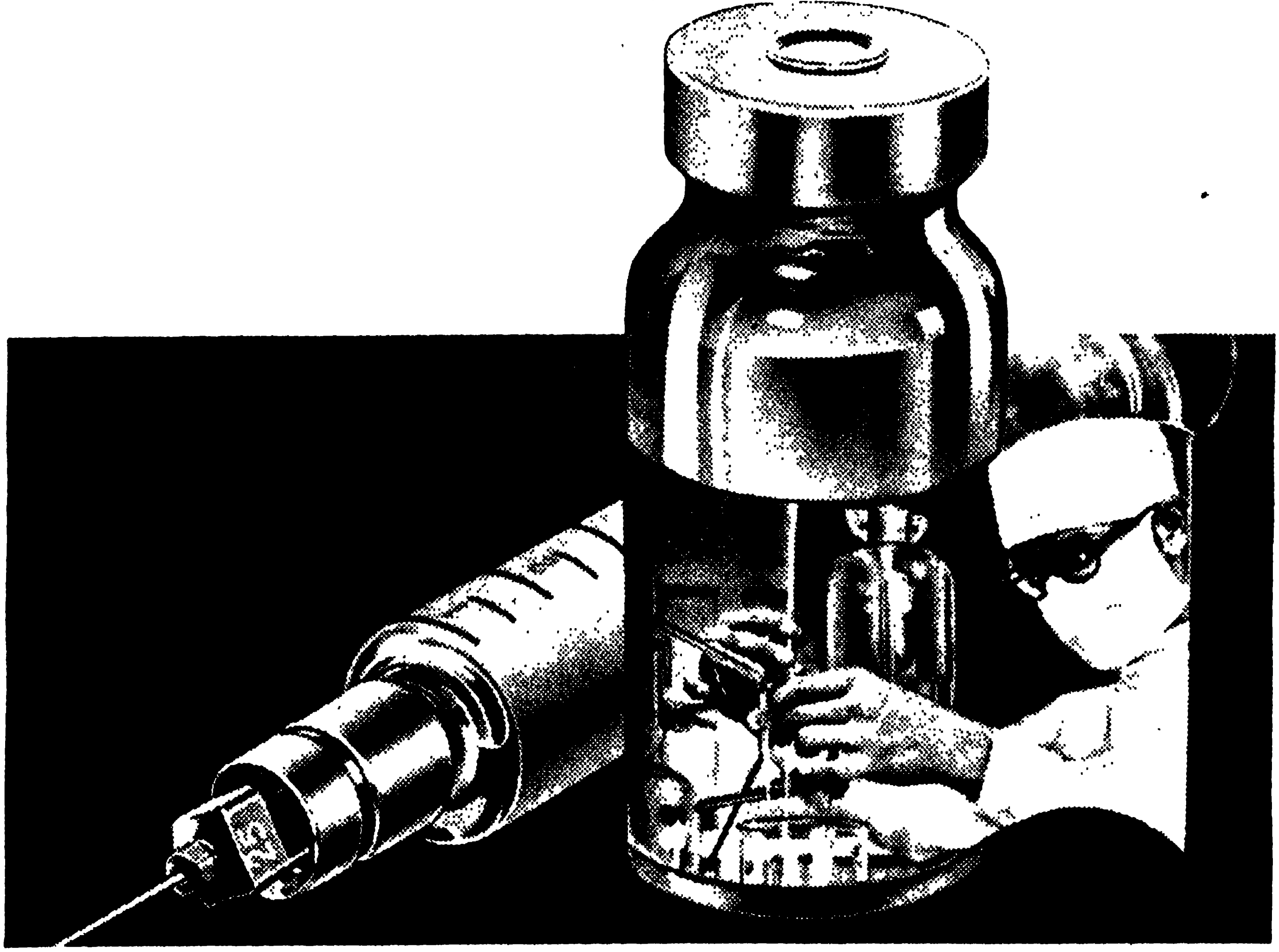

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The Strange Story of Pan Singh Tomar: From Asian Games to Chambal Ravines

Pan Singh Tomar retired as a *subedar* from the Indian army. But he achieved much more than that while serving the nation for 22 years in the army. He was a superb athlete, holding the national record in the 3,000 metre steeplechase with a timing of 8 minutes 53.4 seconds—a record broken only in 1970. Pan Singh represented India in the 1958 Tokyo Asian Games. But when he came back to his village in 1971, he found himself a victim. No one helped him recover his land. In 1979, Pan Singh took out his gun. **SAUMITRA BANERJEE** reports this unusual story of a most unusual dacoit.

FROM winning gold to looting gold. This is the strange tale of Pan Singh Tomar, a retired subedar of the Indian army and national record holder in the 3,000 metre steeplechase between 1960 and 1970. Pan Singh Tomar turned into a dacoit in 1979, eight years after he had retired after 22 years of meritorious service with the Indian army.

Born in 1932 into a poor family in Bhirausa village in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh, Pan Singh was forced to discontinue school at a very early age, and spent most of his time assisting his father Ishwar Singh, and his brother Matadin, in farming. But even as a child, Pan Singh decided that he wanted to do something other than the traditional tilling of the land. Farming, he thought, was only good enough for old age. "I have known Pan Singh since he was a child," said Ratan Singh, a village elder. "He was always active, always running around but not very interested in doing the work that his father did." But Pan Singh could do little about making his way in the big wide world—until in 1949, when he was selected to join the army, thanks to his strappling physique.

Once in the army, Pan Singh excelled in sports. In 1960 he set the national record in the 3,000 metres steeplechase with a timing of 8 minutes 53.4 seconds, and this was bettered only in 1970 by Gurmej Singh who won the bronze medal in the Asian Games by clocking 8 minutes 53.2 seconds. Pan Singh had himself worn the national colours: he participated in the Asian Games in Tokyo in 1958, though he could not win any medals. During his days as a sportsman Pan Singh was known as a tall, powerful, long-striding runner, and went abroad several times on training tours.

In 1971, Pan Singh Tomar retired from the army and returned to his village to assist his brother Matadin in the profession he had left for his old age, farming. With his return, his troubles with a rich and powerful relative, Babu Singh, began. He found, on his return, that his brother Matadin had, under pressure, sold some of the family land to Babu Singh. Land is a precious asset in a village. Pan Singh was angry, and he wanted that land back. Babu Singh, quite understandably, was in no mood to return the land: in any case, he was demanding a price which Pan Singh was not willing to pay. There was no settlement, but a very typical rural enmity was born.

According to some sources, Pan Singh began dabbling with crime much before he finally left for the ravines. Being the kind of person he was, with a very "macho" idea of himself, it is quite possible that he felt hemmed in by the quiet rural life and was attracted by the romanticism associated with dacoits. It is necessary to repeat that dacoity is not really looked upon as a heinous crime: the *baghi* (rebel) has a status that no ordinary thief or brigand could even begin to match.

What is certain is that as early as in

Sind river flows amidst ravines

[illegible] VIR JAYNER

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1973 Pan Singh was implicated in a case of dacoity in Diakata village in the Dholpur district of Rajasthan. According to the police, one of the gang members who had committed that dacoity was caught, and he revealed to the police that among the persons involved in the dacoity was none other than Pan Singh. The police dutifully lodged a case against him. But he was released on bail, and nothing came of it. All was well with Pan Singh Tomar till 1979, when his barely hidden anger against Babu Singh surfaced again.

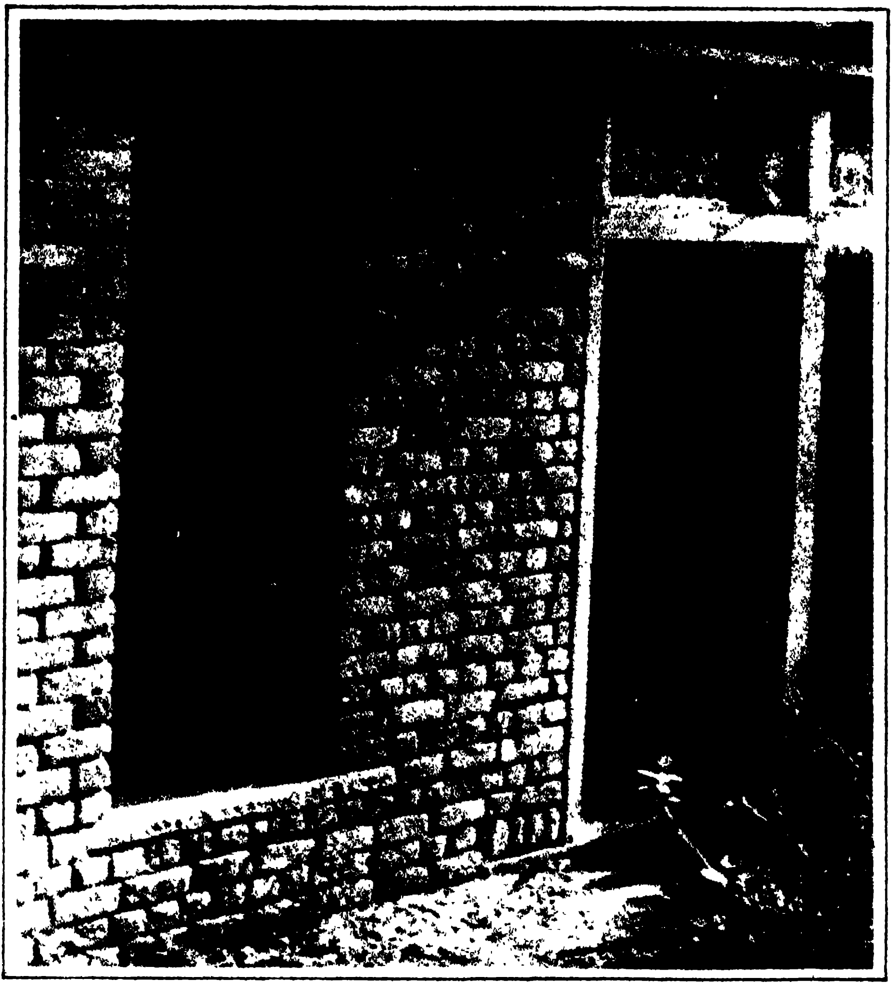
It was early 1979, and the old land dispute had still not been resolved. Pan Singh had approached the authorities to intervene, but nothing had come of that either. So he went directly to Babu Singh again. Babu Singh was as adamant as before. Not merely adamant, but violent too, this time. When Pan Singh began pestering him, he collected some village toughs (this was in the first week of March), beat up Pan Singh, insulted Pan Singh's daughter and snatched away her ornaments. Pan Singh went to the police to report the matter. But even while the police were taking down the complaint, Babu Singh reached the police station. Babu Singh was an influential man of the village, and he told the police that there was no need to register Pan Singh's complaint as it was "baseless." Instead, he lodged a complaint of his own against Pan Singh! His complaint was registered by the police, and Pan Singh's ignored. Pan Singh felt helpless; no one in the village would assist him either, no villager was willing to take on Babu Singh. Pan Singh decided that he would avenge the injustice himself.

Just one day after this, Pan Singh, unable to get Babu Singh, shot dead his nephew, Jagannath Singh, in broad daylight. He then absconded to the Kuanri ravines. Accompanying him were his brother Matadin, and a faithful *dhobi* Ram Charan.

Jagannath Singh did not die; he only sustained an injury which healed. But Pan Singh had not given up; his desire for revenge was as strong as ever. In any case, the focal point of his anger was still alive. Just a couple of days after Pan Singh left for the ravines, Babu Singh was shot dead while returning home—by Pan Singh, who had been waiting in an ambush. His revenge was still not complete. Over a year later, on 20 September 1980, Babu Singh's two sons, Jarnail Singh and Havildar Singh, were working in their fields around 10.30 in the morning. Suddenly Pan Singh and Matadin appeared from behind a boulder. Before the two sons of Babu Singh had time to shout for help, Pan Singh shot the two of them dead and went away. His passion for revenge had finally been quenched. But now he would have to be a *baghi* for the rest of his life.

Today, Babu Singh's house in Bhirausa is guarded by armed policemen.

DHARAM VIR JEYNER



Pan Singh's house

The dacoits' intelligence agents

The dacoit gangs have their own well spread-out intelligence network. When this reporter reached Bhind, he was immediately spotted and word was sent back to the dacoits about both my intentions and my movements in Bhind. The main informer is the white-collar middleman who is officially lawabiding but, in fact, has made dacoity into a profitable industry for himself by becoming the link between the outlaws and society. He provides the dacoit with information about police movements, police informers (who die a cruel death if ever caught)—and which wealthy man of the area can be a potential victim. The last is particularly vital these days when kidnapping rather than just simple loot has become the main source of income for the dacoits. Indeed, it is this middleman who becomes the conduit of information and money during a kidnapping—he ensures that the money reaches the dacoit and the kidnapped person reaches home safely. The fee is on a percentage basis. It is this middleman too who supplies the dacoit gangs with provisions like food, clothing and other day-to-day requirements. Of course the profit he makes is handsome.

Besides, many of the policemen too are in league with the dacoits, betraying the force in return for cash. "It is very difficult for us sometimes to plan and capture dacoits because they have information about where we are going to raid, and by the time we reach they have got away," explains C. P. Singh, superintendent of police for Morena Apart from [illegible] loyalty cemented by cash, there are more "honourable" loyalties—like caste, or geography, or blood between dacoits and some of their pursuers in the police.

Lastly, the fact that the dacoits camouflage themselves by the simple expedient of wearing police uniforms leads to its own problems of confusion. Often villagers and policemen themselves attack other policemen thinking them to be dacoits.

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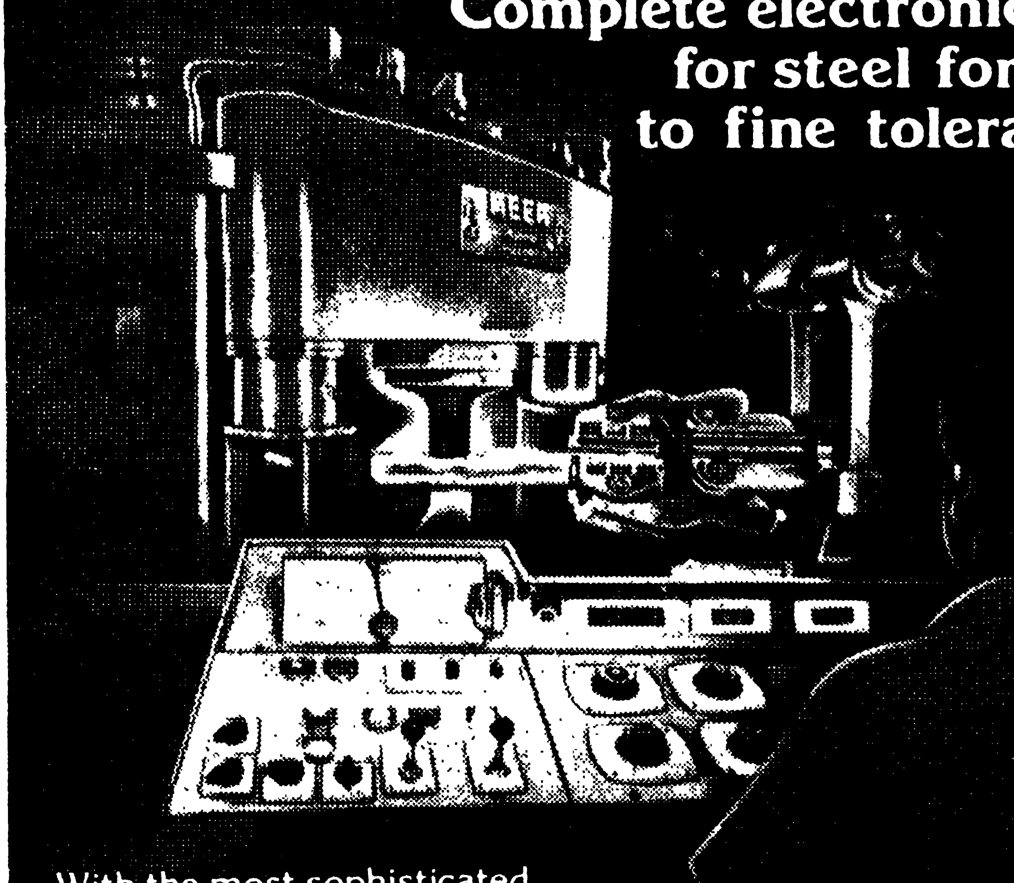

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Bhirausa itself is a very remote village and to reach it one has to travel through 20 kilometres of dirt track. For a police party to reach the village by jeep from Sihonia, the nearest police station, it takes at least one hour. But Bhirausa has now become famous, thanks to its famous son Pan Singh Tomar. Whenever we asked anyone the way to Bhirausa the stock reply was, "You want to go to Pan Singh's village?" We were travelling on our own, unaccompanied by any policeman, and the people were helpful in directing us. In the village we met Ram Swaroop, whose house is just next to Pan Singh's old house, now deserted and half broken.

"What was Pan Singh like when he used to live here?" we asked Ram Swaroop. "He was a friendly, nice person," Ram Swaroop replied. "He was very fond of playing cards and whenever he wanted to do so he would go around telling people that they had worked hard enough for one day, and it was time to relax. And he would collect people and they would play cards till late into the night. During the day, he spent most of his time farming. Nor was he known to be a bad man. True, he was involved in a dacoity case in 1973, but after that we did not know of any case where he was involved. His trouble was really over land. I remember when Pan Singh returned to the village he had a big argument with Matadin over why he had sold the land to Babu Singh without asking him. And since then, off and on, they have had disputes with Babu Singh's family, which is a very influential family in our village. Then of course Pan Singh became a *baghi* and killed Babu Singh and his sons. But Babu Singh had harassed him a lot."

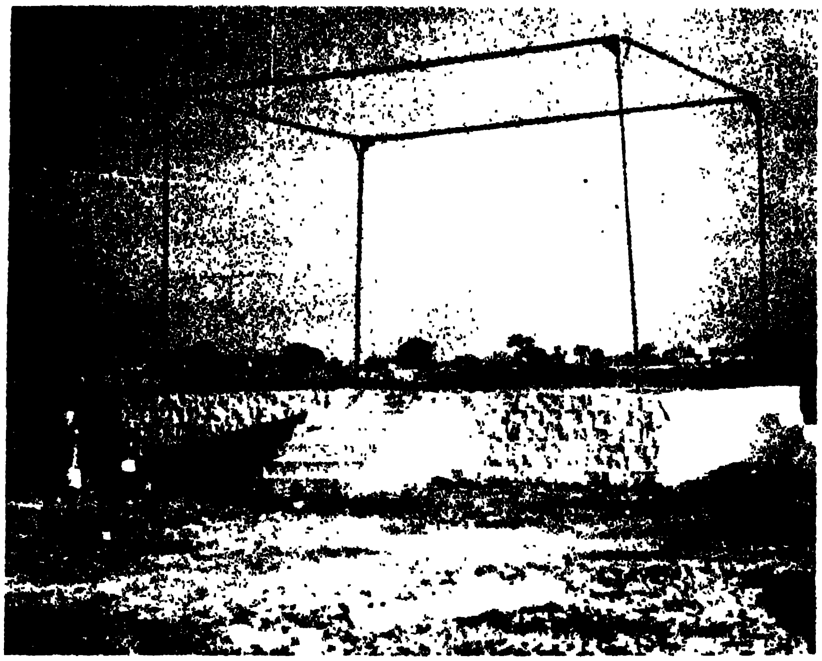
People from Babu Singh's family obviously have a different view of Pan Singh. Jagannath Singh showed us the scar on his arm which had been left behind by Pan Singh's bullet. "My uncle did not do anything wrong by refusing to part with the land. After all, he had bought the land and not snatched it. He told him to return the money and he would return the land. So why should he kill him? He should be captured by the police and punished."

That is precisely what the police has been trying to do—and nearly did in an encounter on 22 November last year. It was a joint effort by the police of Gwalior and Morena. Though the police failed to either kill or arrest Pan Singh, they did kill his brother Matadin.

This was a big blow to Pan Singh Tomar, who within a short while has managed to establish a fearsome reputation. But Pan Singh used the occasion of his brother's death to inform those who were watching that he had now not only become a confirmed dacoit, but also joined the big league. Displaying the courage that a *baghi* must show to earn the respect of his peers and enter the stories of villagers, he carried the body of his brother with him while escaping: he was determined that his brother would be given a proper funeral and his body would not reach either a police mortuary or be eaten by jackals. With the body, he crossed over from Morena district in Madhya Pradesh to Bharatpur in Rajasthan, where Matadin was duly cremated. It was there too that he formed an official alliance with another dacoit called Sarnam Singh, who operates in that area. There are certain traditional ceremonies to seal such an alliance. On 5 December Pan Singh Tomar and Sarnam Singh exchanged turbans and vowed that they would cooperate and never betray each other.

It was an important vow. The life of a *baghi* is always in demand. ■

Rebels, not dacoits


DHARM VIR JAYNER

Dais at Jaura where the '72 surrender took place

Banditry in this region has its roots as far back as the 12th century AD when Anangpal, a *Tomar* king of Delhi, was ousted by his now-famous cousin Prithviraj Chauhan. Anangpal took reefuge in the Chambal ravines, made it his base and from here made ceaseless efforts to reoccupy Delhi. It is here that the term *baghi* (rebel), which is what the dacoits call themselves, orginates. Anangpal's successors too tried to get to Delhi, but all such attempts were thwarted by Prithviraj Chauhan. However, with the setting up of the Sultanate and the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan, the Chauhan loyalists too went to the ravines and set up small dynastic rulerships. Anyone who passed through the region—Mohammedan, Maratha or British —was harassed. In fact, the *rajput sardars* were largely responsible for the Mughals shifting their capital from Agra to Delhi. It was fairly common for a passing imperial treasury to be attacked by the *baghis*.

With the decline of the Mughals and the annexation of Gwalior by the Marathas in the second half of the eighteenth century, lawlessness in central India increased, and the Marathas found it difficult to completely subdue the rebellious *rajputs* and *gujars*. Even during the British *raj*, though efforts were made to eliminate dacoity, none of them succeeded.

As a result, dacoity is not really considered an offence by people, but just another profession, albeit a trifle dicey one. Dacoits are by and large respected. It is precisely for this reason that the police find it difficult to capture dacoits—they do not get enough support from the local people. There is no social stigma attached to dacoity and often the social status of a person rises after he becomes a *baghi*. Violence is romanticised and made palatable—at least to those who are directly affected by it. But this is not the only reason why villagers are unwilling to come forward. The other reason is fear: it does not take the dacoits very long to find out who has ratted on them—and their punishment is brutal death.

In every walk of life a harijan has to face prejudice

Yogendra Makwana

Yogendra Makwana is the union minister of state for home affairs, and among the responsibilities specially assigned to him is harijan affairs. He is a harijan himself—and he comes from Gujarat. And the caste Hindus of Gujarat have risen against harijans, demanding that the special reservations in education given to the historically oppressed untouchables be scrapped. We spoke to him in Delhi to find out his views on the agitation.

Q: You have been accused of challenging the chief minister of Gujarat on the issue of, this agitaton. How do you react?

A: On the issue of reservation there is no difference of opinion between me and the chief minister. I have made the position very clear in both the houses of Parliament. In every democratic party there are healthy differences of opinion, but it does not mean that I am against the chief minister.

Q: Do you think that the chief minister has behaved as a good administrator in the manner in which he is tackling this situation?

A: He has tried his best to tackle the situation, but some interested political parties and individuals, who are playing their dirty game, have prolonged the agitation.

Q: Don't you think that the harijans should be militant in the face of the oppression that they have to endure?

A: I do not think that militancy will pay. Harijans are very poor and socially backward, and for ages they have been suppressed by the high caste Hindus. They have to depend for their bread on the high caste Hindus. Populationwise, they are in a minority. In Gujarat, there are hardly a few harijan houses in every village and therefore they are easily subjected to atrocities.

Q: Does this not make you angry, both as a human being and as a responsbile politician?

A: Becoming angry is not a solution. We have to find out some solution to the problem. I am trying to do that.

Q: What is your solution?

A: The main cause of their suffering is their economic inequality and poverty. Nearly 70 to 80 per cent scheduled castes are living below the poverty line: they have to be lifted above it. It is for this that our government has started a new scheme of special central assistance to the states for scheduled caste development. It is for the first time in the history of this nation that a special component plan meant for the economic upliftment of the scheduled castes has been drafted. Under this plan, many schemes for economic welfare of these communities will be taken up and it is our endeavour to bring at least 50 per cent of the total population of scheduled castes, which is about two crores families, above the poverty line during the sixth five-year plan.

Q: You said this was the first time: do you mean to say that nothing was done in the past, in the times of Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Mrs Gandhi?

A: You have not understood me. In fact, this scheme has been evolved only because of Mrs Gandhi. It is because of her initiative and interest that it took shape. There were a lot of difficulties in the initial stages. The finance ministry and the planning commission had their doubts about the viability of this scheme, but it was Mrs Gandhi who got the cabinet clearance.

Q: Are your wife and your daughter playing a very important part in helping the harijans today in Gujarat?

A: My wife is an MLA. My daughters are still studying, and they have not entered politics, nor is there any intention on their part to enter politics.

Q: Your state government has obviously failed to stop this agitation.

A: It is not the government who can alone stop this agitation, and stop the atrocities on harijans. Unless all the people of Gujarat become involved in (stopping it) it won't stop, because it has assumed a great dimension and spread to the villages also. All the social workers and leaders of society, irrespective of their party allegiance, should come forward and stop it. The role of the government should not be seen in isolation, particularly on this issue. It is ultimately for the entire society to do justice to the weaker sections. In Gujarat, there are many leaders who claim to be Gandhian. They should come forward and help the government in this task.

Q: Why do you think that this agitation started so suddenly?

A: It started with a limited demand: the demand for abolition of the system of "carrying forward" an interchangeability of reserved seats in the post-graduate medical courses. This demand was made by the medical students, but after some time some political parties took undue interest in it, and encouraged the agitation, even giving financial assistance.

Q: Who are these parties?

A: I have already named them. The leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party at the national level have supported reservation and expressed their displeasure towards the agitation. But at the same time, their MLA from Gujarat, Mr Ashok Bhatt has supported this agitation. Their MLA from Baroda, Mr Makrand Desai, when asked, did not clarify his position on this issue. The Lok Dal leader, Mr Chimanbhai Patel, also openly supported the agitation in the initial stages. But now he is not suppporting it.

Q: What kind of psychological impact will this agitation leave in the minds of people?

A: I agree with you that it could leave scars on human minds. But it is a social problem and all of us have to ponder over it. The values established by Bapuji have been forgotten by the people of this country and we have to do something to remind them.

Q: Have they also been forgotten by the politicians of the country?

A: I will not say "all." But some, of course.

Q: Has Gujarat forgotten Gandhiji?

A: I will not put it quite like that. But I would like to put it in a different way. The influence of caste has come to the fore all over the country, and it has its impact in Gujarat also.

Q: What do you think is an answer to the harijan problem? I don't think just a component plan is a complete answer.

A: You are right. Only economic welfare is not the answer. We have to educate them and create an atmosphere in the country where people treat them equally in social life also.

Q: Have you faced any prejudices in your life?

A: Oh! Many a time. I was not allowed to enter school in my primary days. I had my primary education in a hut in a harijan locality. My teachers were also harijans

Q: Have you faced any prejudice in your political life?

A: In every walk of life, a harijan has to face prejudice. At the same time, one has to be brave enough to overcome it. I have done it.

Q: One of the things that people told us in Gujarat was that the political caste plank of your party in the assembly, panchayat and corporation elections has been KHAM and that is one of the the reasons why the patels, brahamins, etc. are annoyed with your government. Therefore, they utiised this opportunity provided by the medicos. How do you react?

A: My party is wedded to the cause of all the downtrodden and the depressed people of the country. Some of the leaders in Gujarat during their discussions, use the word KHAM to denote a combination of kshatriya, harijan, adivasi and minorities, since these sections have been the main supporters of the Congress Party from the beginning. In a lighter vein, they refer to our party as comprising of KHAM. But there was no conscious effort on our part to make an exclusive group of these communities. At the same time, it is a fact that the harijans have wholeheartedly supported the Congress Party in all the elections. The upper castes, particularly those who are opposing the Congress, were annoyed by this. The return of Mrs Gandhi to power has not yet been digested by them. Whatever we have achieved they wanted to undo.

Q: 118 out of 140 MLAs of the Congress Party belong to the KHAM communities. But there is no harijan representative in the Gujarat cabinet. There are ony two junior ministers.

A: Yes, there is no harijan in the cabinet. There is one deputy minister and one minister of state. The harijans did demand a cabinet minister. But, at the same time, they never tried to demand it through agitation. It was within the party framework and party forums that they demanded it. The high caste Hindus have no reason to be angry, because there is no harijan in the cabinet.

Q: The medicos demand was the demand of a very small section of the society. How did it spread?

A: It shows the strength of casteist elements in our society. They took advantage of the situation and tried to settle their accounts.

Q: Law and order is a state subject, but protection of harijans is a central subject as well, and so, can you not interfere and order an inquiry into this?

A: I brought this to the notice of the state government and they promptly reacted. The state government promised to engage not only the best advocate but also to consider sympathetically the demands made by the harijan leaders in connection with this case. I am fully satisfied by the action taken by the state government in so far as this case is concerned.

What it means to be a harijan in Gujarat—eve for a central minister's daughter

Anuradha Makwana

Shantabehn is the wife of Mr Yogendra Makwana, minister of state fo home affairs at the centre with special charge of harijan affairs among other things. Her husband may be a central minister now, but Shantabehn was an MLA in 1962, long before her husband entered the political fray. The agitation by caste Hindu Gujaratis against reservation for harijans brought Shantabehn, who is a harijan as is her husband into the limelight. She refused to be cowed down, and played a leading role in keeping harijan morale and courage up during attack. And during the agitation another name was heard in Ahmedabad—that of Anuradha Makwana, their 20-year-old daughter. We went to talk to them, not so much to find out what they did during the agitation, though that of course inevitably came in, but more to learn what it feels like to be a harijan, even a privileged harijan, in modern and officially liberated India. This, in particular, was what we really wanted to know from Anuradha, who was born a decade after the Indian constitution was adopted.

Q: How did Gujarat, the home state of Mahatma Gandhi, get embroiled in a casteist agitation like this? How did the upper castes start this suddenly?

Shantabehn: This could not have started suddenly; some amount of planning must have been done. I can't say what planning was done, but a movement of this sort could not have started all of a sudden.

Q: Who did the planning?

Shantabehn: Had we known, wouldn't the government have nabbed them?

Q: Anuradha, you are studying in a college, you are young; in your opinion, what is the condition of your community in our country today? We are not talking simply in terms of the agitation; we are talking to you as a young woman from your community, who is alert, who reacts to what happens around. Do you feel discriminated against?

Anuradha: Some benefits have come to those harijans who live in the town. But their number is microscopic. When I accompany my mother to her constituency, or when I go with my father, I see the small villages and the condition of the poor harijans in those villages. There are a higher number of educated people in Gujarat than in the other states, but even then there a so many downtrodden people in o state: it is shocking!

Q: So what do you think should done?

Anuradha: To begin with, harija must be educated. Facilities for educ tion must be given to them...

Q: But has that facility not be given to them already? Our polici have been providing for such thin for so many years...

Anuradha: Yes, the policies ha been there, but have they be accepted by society?

Q: So what should be done?

Anuradha: My family is so ad anced, even then in my schooldays had to often sit separately. T brahmin and the upper caste girls us to shun me. When *I* have experienc such discrimination, when staying in town and belonging to a family whi is advanced, then you can well imagi the condition of the harijans living villages and belonging to poor fan lies.

Q: Don't you feel angry and p voked?

Anuradha: Sometimes I feel e tremely annoyed. But then I think th when this has been the system f thousands of years, it is bound to ta some time to disappear. What can

> **Anuradha: When I was studying in class six, my father got me admission to a leading girls' school in Ahmedabad... During the recess I went to drink water, and the other girls told me that as I was a harijan, I should not drink water from the same place as them. I was shocked... When I returned to the classroom I was weeping... On hearing I was a harijan the teacher turned to me and said, "What is there to weep about?"**
> **This was my first experience in school. Won't you feel bad if you are stopped from even drinking water?**

ain by getting annoyed?

Q: What do you intend to do to orrect the system? If someone discriminated against me on such grounds I vould get very angry.

Anuradha: We are outnumbered. What can we do? If in a class of 50 tudents, there are four of five harijan tudents, what can they do? Even if we o for a confrontation, what do we tand to gain?

Q: Harijans constitute a very significant percentage of our population, a percentage that can tilt election results one way or the other. Laws are ertainly made in their favour, but how many are fulfilled?

Shantabehn: Let me reply to this uestion. To begin with, harijans hould get proper facilities and help or getting education at least upto chool level. Harijans have benefited rom the government's policies; it is wrong to say that no benefits have ccrued to them all these years. Take he case of my husband. His father was n inspector of schools. Mr Makwana had to work on the land till he passed his matriculation. He also had to work while he did his higher studies. In the poor rural families, the children have o start working from the age of eight or earlier. Normally, the eldest child is entrusted with the job of looking after he other children, so there is little hance of him or her going to school ven if the parents want to send him or her. That is the meaning of poverty. Parents cannot even provide food to he children, despite wanting to—what o talk of sending them to school. But even then some people do manage to tudy and come up, to get educated nd get a job, perhaps of a clerk. But ven after becoming a clerk a person has to look after his whole family, so he can't really get emancipated.

Q: What do you think will be the ong-term effect of this movement in Gujarat?

Shantabehn: I think the movement as (once again) made the harijans ealise what their situation is, under what conditions they live even today. The scheduled castes, cutting across arty lines, have realised that unless they work for their welfare, nothing will happen. The government has given many facilities, but the gains, though little, have become an eyesore or the upper castes Those people ave orthodox ideas; they do not want o see our upliftment

Anuradha (interrupting): Why only orthodox people? Even those who are ducated and modern cannot tolerate us. A friend of my father, an America educated doctor, who comes to our home so often, got his son admitted to a medical college on a donation seat, as he did not have good marks. Now this boy stands up during the agitation and says, "What is the need for harijans' sons to become doctors? Are we not there?" Now tell me, if a boy from a family like this, educated, who has been around the world, holds such feelings, what can you expect the uneducated upper caste people to be?

Shantabehn Makwana

Q: Can you, Anuradha, tell us something about your own experiences at school, in your college...?

Anuradha: When I was studying in class six, my father got me admission to a leading girls' school in Ahmedabad. I did not know that I should not disclose my caste to the upper caste girls. When some people asked me, I told them that I was a harijan. During the recess I went to drink water, and the other girls told me that as I was a harijan, I should not drink water from the same place as them. I was shocked. This was in Ahmedabad; that too in a leading school. So imagine the condition in other places!

When I returned to the classrom (it was a mathematics class) after the recess, I was weeping. My teacher asked me why I was weeping. I told her that I had been scolded by the other girls when I had gone to drink water. The teacher enquired from the other girls why they had objected to my drinking water. They told her, "You don't know? She is a harijan." On hearing this the teacher turned to me and said, "What wrong have they done? What is there to weep about?" This was my first experience in school. Later when I mentioned this incident to my father, he told me I should not heed what the upper caste girls had said, and should simply forcibly drink water despite their objections. After that I started doing that. But that was my first experience. Won't you feel bad if you are stopped from even drinking water?

Q: For how long will such things go on?

Shantabehn: You should put this question to society.

Anuradha: But this mentality has also undergone some change. The same girl who stopped me from drinking water now frequents my home. Her father often comes to call on my father and recently he came with the request that my father should help his son get admission. She even eats in my home! But I tell you, whatever the upper castes may do (when being liberal), always at the back of their minds they know that we are harijans, untouchables. Once a friend came to my house and said, "Seeing your house, it does not seem that you are harijans."

Q: Anuradha, how many boys and girls of your generation read about or care to think about Gandhiji? Do they consider him to be relevant?

Anuradha: There is a sort of despair in our generation. Most of my friends do not read books at all, leave aside Gandhiji. In my college, I do not have too many friends: what can you talk to them about? They either talk about films, or dresses... They don't have any time for serious matters. There is a kind of despair.

Shantabehn: Even the staunchest followers of Gandhiji in Gujarat are keeping quiet today. They should openly come out and say whether they are for or against reservations. Even Morarji Desai, who proclaims himself to be a great Gandhian, does not have the courage to open his mouth. So why talk of the younger generation...

Q: Don't you think that even after the agitation is over, the government might quietly surrender to the demands of the agitators?

A: How can they? The protection to harijans is given by the constitution. Mrs Gandhi's sympathies are with us. So how can they surrender to the agitators?

Q: Why are there only two harijans in the Solanki ministry, and why were even these two not consulted before the carry-forward and interchangeability schemes were scrapped?

Shantabehn: The health minister must have consulted the chief minister.

Q: But why did he not take his harijan colleagues into confidence?

A: The CM himself may have taken the decision. I do not want to comment on personalities. Yes, the two ministers are saying they were not taken into confidence. But I don't want to comment. ■

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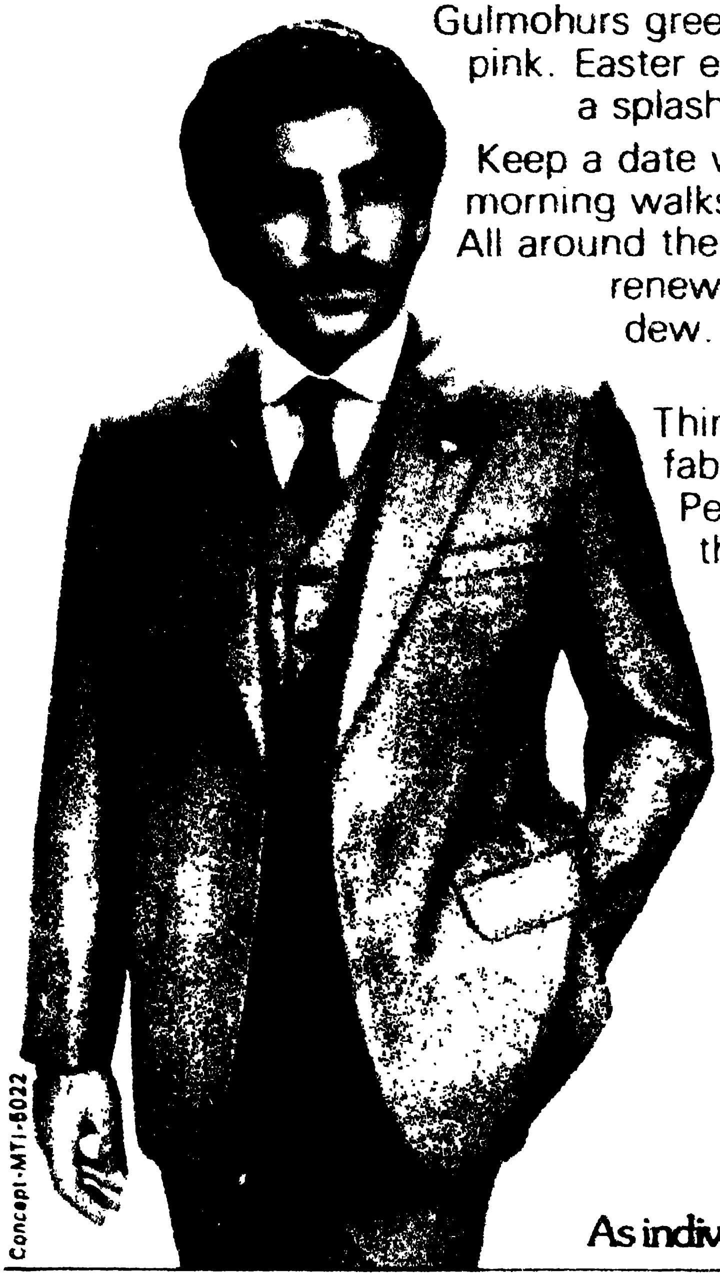

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The bearer bonds are barren

By SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY

ON 2 February 1981, the President of India promulgated the first ordinance of the year (and in keeping with Indira Gandhi's preference—while the nation was asleep) titled "The Special Bearer Bonds Ordinance, 1981". Since then, howls of protest have been heard from every corner of the country regarding this ordinance.

No one has to date understood the *timing*, the *need* or the *worth* of the proposals contained in the ordinance. Parliament was to meet just two weeks later and no one was convinced with the paragraph in the ordinance which said: "Whereas Parliament is not in session and the President is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it *necessary for him* to take *immediate* action..."

What was the immediacy? In 1978 during the Janata regime, an ordinance was issued demonetising 1000-rupee notes. That step achieved nothing.

Nor have any of the other steps to flush out black money. Since 1936, the government of India has been drawing up schemes to end black money. Up to independence the emphasis was on tightening up the tax machinery. After 1947, we have tried out the "seduction" schemes, abandoning the earlier punitive approach. But all the seduction schemes have lacked the necessary sex appeal, and so have failed to produce any results.

In 1951, a Voluntary Disclosure Scheme (VDS) was introduced. "All is forgiven" was the motto of this scheme, but not more than Rs 70 crores in income was disclosed, and a mere Rs 11 crores collected as taxes. Obviously many were not interested in being forgiven. Later in 1965, in the context of the patriotic fervour of the 1962-66 period, another VDS was introduced with a "now or never" slogan. But black money spinners were unrepentant. Only Rs 198 crores was realised and Rs 59 crores paid as taxes. In real terms, the performance was worse than in 1951.

In 1975, under the *Kadi irada* (iron will) Emergency rule, yet another VDS made the scene. This time things would be different, we were told, because the opposition was in jail, and Mrs Gandhi and her sibling Sanjay Gandhi meant business. But so did the black money *wallahs*. Although about Rs 14,000 crores in black money was circulating in the economy, only Rs 741 crores was disclosed, and a mere Rs 241 crores collected as taxes. About 49 per cent of the assessed persons were ladies and minors who had never been assessed before! So much for *Kadi irada*.

When the Janata party came to power, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was constituted by the new Lok Sabha under P. V. Narasimha Rao (it is the convention for a nominee of the largest opposition party to become the PAC chairman). One of the members of this powerful MPs' committee was Vasant Sathe Both these gentlemen are now cabinet ministers, and were present when the Indira cabinet drafted the "Special Bearer Bond Ordinance" for the President's signature. Neither of them even squeaked in the cabinet meeting but as chairman and member of the PAC, they had roared and thundered on the VDSs. Their golden "voluntarily disclosed thoughts" are contained in the 123rd report of the PAC, now a public document, in which they declared all past VDSs as "frauds" and said that no government should try the VDSs in future! But their recommendations have been thrown to the winds.

The present "Special Bearer Bonds" scheme however will also flop as the previous others did Whereas the previous VDSs have had the real *and* stated objectives of flushing out black money, I learn that the real objectives of the current bearer bonds scheme are not really that, despite the stated objective being to "canalize for productive purpose the black money." Since the ordinance was promulgated only Rs 15 crores of black money was disclosed, of which Rs 8 crores is from Delhi! In all previous VDSs the principal "donor" has been Bombay. Why Delhi this time? Thereby hangs a tale!

When these bonds were floated, officials of the finance minister said that Rs 1,400 crores would be netted as "disclosed" income. With black money being generated at the rate of Rs 20,000 crores annually, this is a defeat before the battle. But then the real aim of the bonds is not black money in the country.

Another aspect of the bonds is that a single bond will cost Rs 10,000 which is transferable like a promissory note, and after ten years it is encashable as Rs 12,000, i.e., earning a compound rate of interest of 1. 8 per cent. Ordinary bonds fetch 10 per cent interest, and informal black money loans fetch 20-35 per cent return. Therefore, why would anyone in his senses go in for these bonds? The only circumstance is when the alternative to not purchasing these bonds is a high probability of detection and a punitive sentence under the law. Is there any such danger? I made enquiries in Bombay, and the *satta wallahs* told me that the probability of detection of black money in India is just 0.02 (i.e., 2 in a 100!).

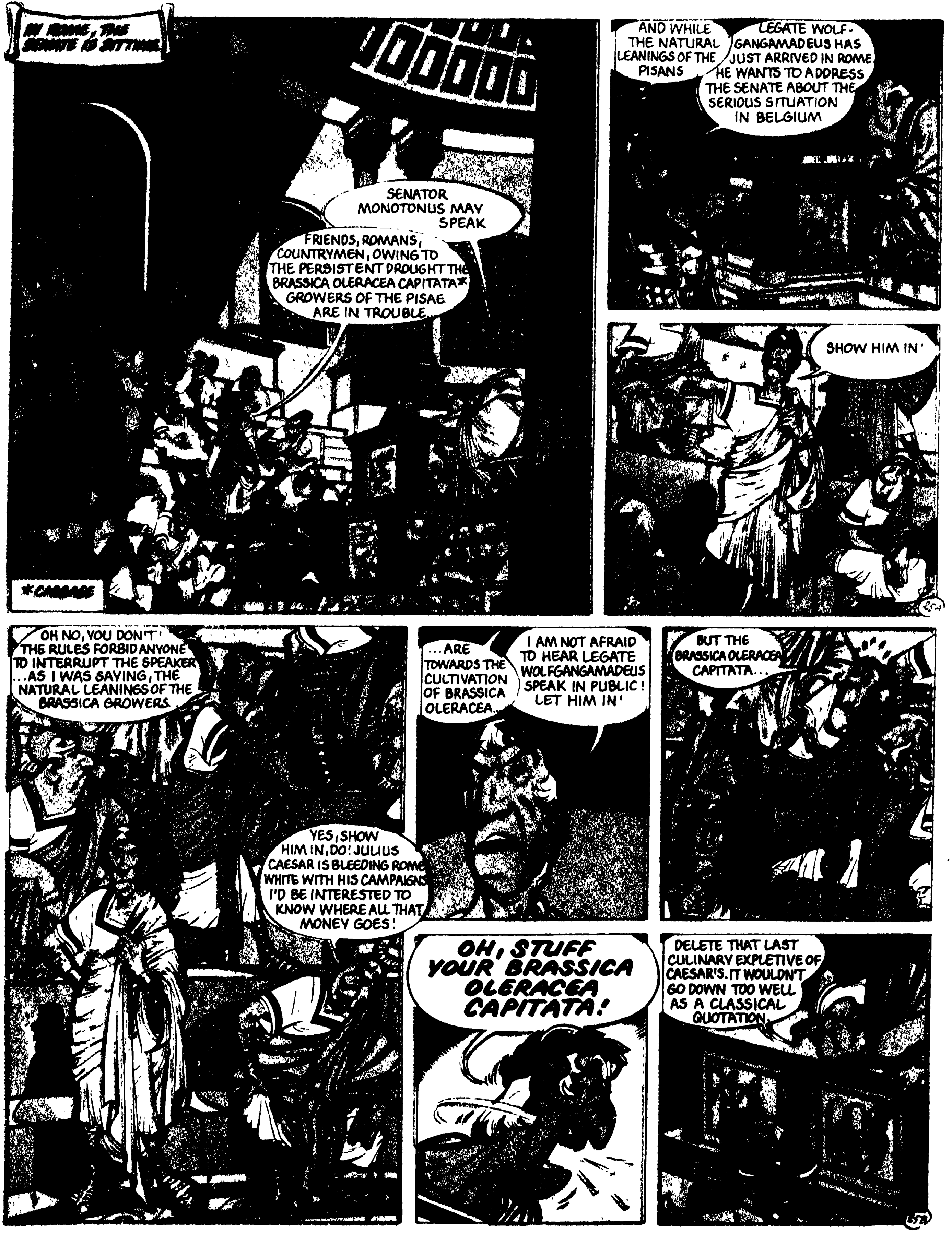
Putting the question in another way, we can determine the probability of detection that should obtain before anyone is "persuaded" to buy the bonds. Assuming that upon detection, 100 per cent of the detected income is confiscated, a black money operator has two alternatives· 1) he buys the bearer bonds meekly and earns 1.8 per cent or 2) he risks lending the black money at 20 per cent interest. On the basis of these two alternatives, it is easy mathematics to prove that unless the probability of being caught is more than 70 (i.e., 7 in 10), it will always be more profitable to risk keeping the black money without disclosing it. In other words, no VDS can work unless it is backed by severe tightening of the tax machinery by which the risk of being caught becomes sufficiently high.

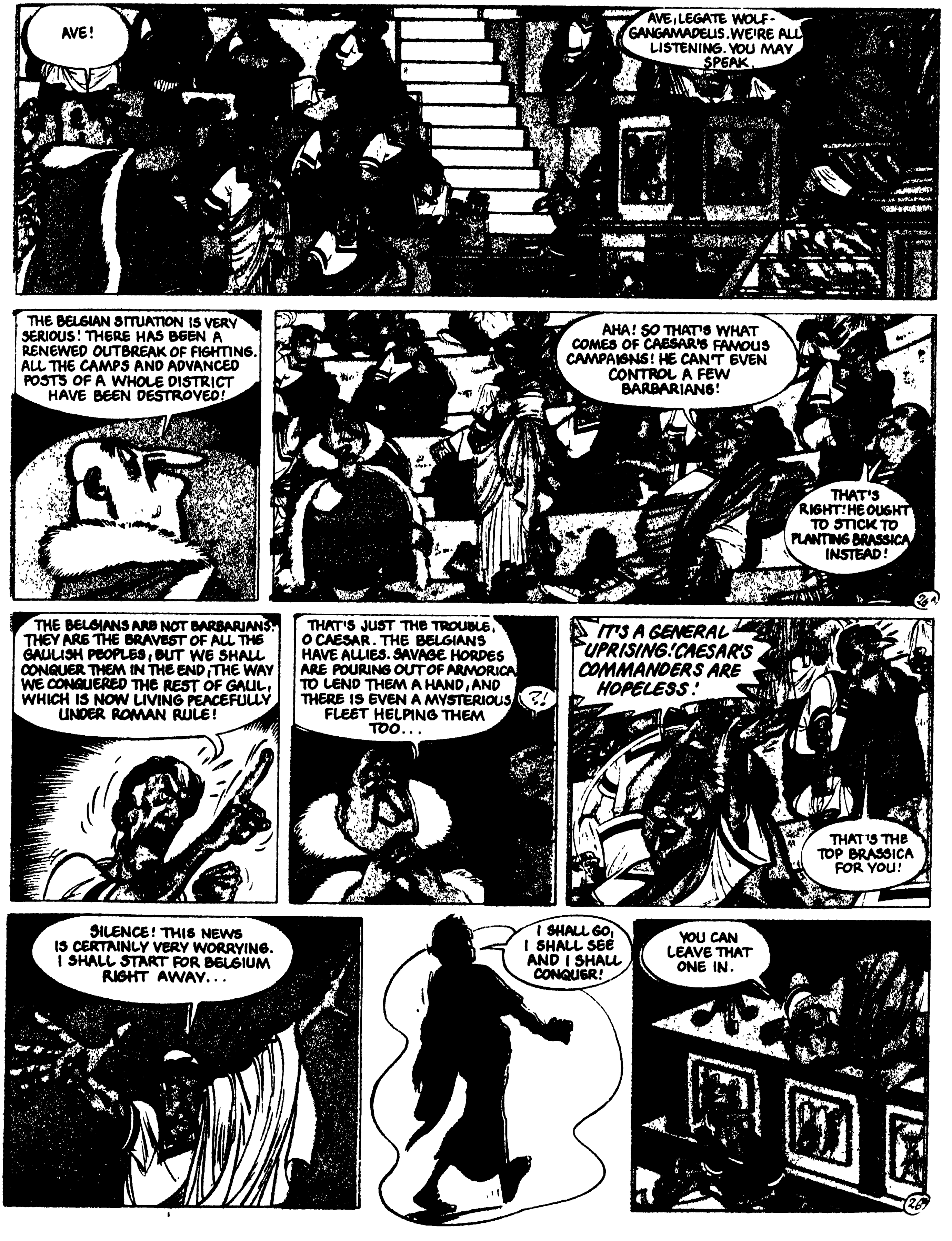
On the contrary, the probability of detection is lower today than ever before. The reason for it is the 1968 ban on company donations to political parties. Most political parties today receive donations in the form of black money. The giver and the taker both know it, and like it too! With political patronage, can any black money spinner be afraid? Black money can only be eliminated by declogging our tax and legal system. The ban on company donations should be scrapped, and political parties should have their accounts audited. The recommendations of the Choksi, L K Jha and Vadilal Dgali committees should be implemented.

But the "Special Bearer Bonds" are not meant to even mop up the spilt suds. It is a logical conclusion to the search for the keys and the digital watch. This is the age of recycling. Even the prince's treasury needs laundering, especially when he is no more.

BELGIUM

by GOSCINNY
and UDERZO


IN ROME, THE SENATE IS SITTING
SENATOR MONOTONUS MAY SPEAK
FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN, OWING TO THE PERSISTENT DROUGHT THE BRASSICA OLERACEA CAPITATA* GROWERS OF THE PISAE ARE IN TROUBLE...
*CABBAGE
AND WHILE THE NATURAL LEANINGS OF THE PISANS
LEGATE WOLFGANGAMADEUS HAS JUST ARRIVED IN ROME. HE WANTS TO ADDRESS THE SENATE ABOUT THE SERIOUS SITUATION IN BELGIUM
SHOW HIM IN!
OH NO, YOU DON'T! THE RULES FORBID ANYONE TO INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER ...AS I WAS SAYING, THE NATURAL LEANINGS OF THE BRASSICA GROWERS
YES, SHOW HIM IN, DO! JULIUS CAESAR IS BLEEDING ROME WHITE WITH HIS CAMPAIGNS! I'D BE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHERE ALL THAT MONEY GOES!
...ARE TOWARDS THE CULTIVATION OF BRASSICA OLERACEA...
I AM NOT AFRAID TO HEAR LEGATE WOLFGANGAMADEUS SPEAK IN PUBLIC! LET HIM IN!
BUT THE BRASSICA OLERACEA CAPITATA...
OH, STUFF YOUR BRASSICA OLERACEA CAPITATA!
DELETE THAT LAST CULINARY EXPLETIVE OF CAESAR'S. IT WOULDN'T GO DOWN TOO WELL AS A CLASSICAL QUOTATION.


AVE!
AVE, LEGATE WOLFGANGAMADEUS. WE'RE ALL LISTENING. YOU MAY SPEAK.
THE BELGIAN SITUATION IS VERY SERIOUS! THERE HAS BEEN A RENEWED OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING. ALL THE CAMPS AND ADVANCED POSTS OF A WHOLE DISTRICT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED!
AHA! SO THAT'S WHAT COMES OF CAESAR'S FAMOUS CAMPAIGNS! HE CAN'T EVEN CONTROL A FEW BARBARIANS!
THAT'S RIGHT! HE OUGHT TO STICK TO PLANTING BRASSICA INSTEAD!
THE BELGIANS ARE NOT BARBARIANS! THEY ARE THE BRAVEST OF ALL THE GAULISH PEOPLES, BUT WE SHALL CONQUER THEM IN THE END, THE WAY WE CONQUERED THE REST OF GAUL, WHICH IS NOW LIVING PEACEFULLY UNDER ROMAN RULE!
THAT'S JUST THE TROUBLE, O CAESAR. THE BELGIANS HAVE ALLIES. SAVAGE HORDES ARE POURING OUT OF ARMORICA TO LEND THEM A HAND, AND THERE IS EVEN A MYSTERIOUS FLEET HELPING THEM TOO...
?!
IT'S A GENERAL UPRISING! CAESAR'S COMMANDERS ARE HOPELESS!
THAT'S THE TOP BRASSICA FOR YOU!
SILENCE! THIS NEWS IS CERTAINLY VERY WORRYING. I SHALL START FOR BELGIUM RIGHT AWAY...
I SHALL GO, I SHALL SEE AND I SHALL CONQUER!
YOU CAN LEAVE THAT ONE IN.
26

EXCLUSIVE! FROM 'THE FIFTH HORSEMAN'

BOMB UNDER NEW YORK

The US President sits in secret conclave with his top advisers. The danger of a nuclear holocaust stares them in the face. If Isreal is not made to withdraw to the pre 1967-war boundaries in 36 hours, then the thermonuclear blast of a three-megaton hydrogen bomb will destroy New York city. It is not a hoax; it is certainly not an ordinary threat; the threat has come from the Libyan leader Col. Kadhafi. This is the scenario for the dramatic new political novel *The Fifth Horseman* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, whose journalistic research into the past has won them so many laurels. The authors of *Freedom at Midnight* now use real-life people and situations to depict what could well happen. The book is published by Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd and is priced at Rs 60, and we bring our readers the first of two exciting extracts.

Shortly after noon, Sunday December 13, an attractive blonde in a polo coat appeared at the Madison Gate of the White House with a bulky manila envelope addressed to the President of the United States.

Then, while the Executive Protection Service sergeant manning the gate was logging in the envelope and passing it through his scanner, she disappeared down Pennsylvania Avenue.

The package was taken to the National Security Council duty officer. It contained a 30-minute BASF tape in Arabic and a complex set of drawings.

The duty officer summoned a State Department Arabist to the White House to translate the tape.

The speaker on it claimed to be Muammar Kadhafi. He had, he said, gained access "to the ultimate weapon on earth."

He had hidden it on Manhattan Island and would, he warned, detonate it in 36 hours if before that time the United States had not forced Israel to withdraw all its settlements from the West Bank of the Jordan, returned East Jeruslam to Arab rule and agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the Arab territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war.

And he warned further, he would detonate it instantly if any attempt was made to evacuate the city.

The duty officer alerted Jack Eastman, the air force major general who had replaced Zbigniew Brezinski as the National Security Adviser. Eastman initiated a well-rehearsed U.S response to such threats of nuclear blackmail.

The envelope was hand-carried to the Nuclear Emergency desk of the FBI headquarters a few blocks from the White House; the blue prints were sent to the Department of Energy's Germantown, Maryland headquarters for study; and Eastman ordered the CIA to run a voice analysis of the tape. It was inconclusive. The handful of student revolutionaries at Libya's Washington Embassy refused to comment.

By late afternoon, Eastman had just about concluded that the threat, like the 50-odd similar threats that had been made in the U.S. during the 70's was a hoax. Or, at the outside, a menace from a group of Palestinians masquerading behind Kadhafi's name.

He was ready to leave his office when the Department of Energy called. The blueprint, Eastman was told, had been sent to Los Alamos by facsimile machine for a detailed analysis. It appeared to be a real nuclear weapons design.

With that the National Security Adviser decided to convene a crisis committee meeting in the White House at eight o'clock. Then he left for the living quarters to inform the President.

At precisely eight o'clock, the President entered the National Security Council conference room in the West-wing of the White House. The men and women in the room rose the instant his familiar figure appeared in the doorway.

He motioned to them to sit, while he remained standing, biting his lower lip as he often did when he was trying to concentrate, appearing in his faded jeans, his rumpled cardigan, even smaller, more vulnerable than usual.

"I want to thank you all for being here tonight," he said in that soft, almost apologetic tone of his," and ask you to pray with me that what's brought us here is just a hoax because..." his voice trailed off "...because if it's not, we've got a long, long night ahead of us."

He took his place in one of the inexpensive chairs upholstered in red rust fabric ringing the oval conference table.

The room was as unprepossessing, as unimaginative a place as the boardroom of a medium-sized Middle Eastern manufacturer of cardboard containers. Yet it was here that the thermo-nuclear Armageddon had been envisaged during the Cuban missile crisis; that the decisions which sent half-a-million Americans to fight and die in Vietnam had been debated.

Its banal appearance was deceptive. At the touch of a button, a massive screen came down from one wall. Another button swept aside a set of curtains to reveal an electronic mapboard. Beside each seat was a drawer containing a secure red telephone.

Most important were the facilities of the White House Communications Centre just beyond. There, banks of communications consoles with television-like screens linked the room and the White House to every vital nerve centre of the U.S. Government; the Pentagon, the CIA, State, the National Security Agency, the Strategic Air Command. NORAD's National Command Centre, in Colorado Springs.

The President turned first to a lean, bald man in a Harris tweed jacket and grey flannels sucking a pipe. Gardiner "Tap" Bennington, the heir to a Massachusetts textile fortune, had replaced Stansfield Turner as the head of the CIA six months earlier.

"Do we have any intelligence to indicate a Palestinian terrorist group might be ready to try something like this, Tap?" he asked.

"Not really, sir. It's something they've talked about for years. But it's always sounded more like hashish talk to us than anything else. We did have one report in the Intelligence community in 1978 that a bunch of them were being trained by the Libyans to pull an armed raid on a nuclear power plant. Hijack it so to speak. But we were never able to confirm it."

"How about Kadhafi?"the President queried. "Would he have the capacity to do something like this?"

Bennington struck a match and noisily lit his pipe, a ploy he'd learned from his second boss, Allen Dulles, who used it to get time to marshall his thoughts. Then he picked up a file stamped "Top Secret" from the table in front of him. "We've been keeping a close eye on him and he's done a number of things that concern us very much."

Swiftly, he ticked them off:

1972 : Kadhafi tries to buy a nuclear reactor from the U.S. The Government halts the sale.

1973 : The Libyan arranges to buy an experimental reactor and highly enriched uranium in San Diego. Kissinger kills the project.

1975 : Kadhafi secretly agrees to finance Pakistan's quest for an "Islamic Bomb".

1976 : (January) The CIA discovers Kadhafi trying to bribe European scientists to work on a nuclear weapons programme.

1976 : (February) Jacques Chirac agrees France will sell Libya a 600-megawatt nuclear reactor.

1976 : (December) Kadhafi offers Gianni Agnelli virtually unlimited financing to involve FIAT in nuclear weapons research.

1978 : Libyan spokesman tells a U.S. scientific delegation "Libya is determined to get atomic arms."

1979 : CIA confirms Libyan-Pakistani atomic link.

The President interrupted. "Okay, Tap, where is he right now? Can he or can he not make a bomb?"

A quick nervous gasp in the distant scientist's voice was audible to each of the men and women in the White House basement. "The blueprint is for a thermo-nuclear device, Mr President, a three megaton hydrogen bomb... It would mean, Sir, that, for all practical purposes, New York City would be wiped off the face of the earth."

Bennington leaned back in his chair. "In our judgment, he's at least five years away from it. He still has only one source of potential fissile material on Libyan soil and that's that light-water reactor the French has just set up for him."

"Could Kadhafi have gotten the plutonium he'd needed to make nuclear weapons out of the reactor if he cheated on it," the President asked Harold Brown. The Secretary of Defence was a former director of the Livermore, California, weapons laboratory, ex-president of Cal. Tech. and a brilliant nuclear physicist.

"Of course he could," Brown answered. "The French and the Germans have been going around the world for years trying to tell people you can't get nuclear weapons out of a nuclear power plant so that they can sell more of them."

"Well, the fact is you can. We blew off a bomb made with plutonium that came from a reactor's burned-out fuel rods 15 years ago. They know that. We gave them the results."

"Well, he'd still have to reprocess the plutonium, wouldn't he find a way to get it out of those fuel rods?"

"Mr President, there's a common misconception in the world that reprocessing plutonium is a very complex, costly technique," Brown replied. "It isn't. It's nothing but straightforward chemistry and it's all in books."

"If you want to do it on an amateurish basis, you don't need any of those complicated choppers or cold rooms. All you need is time, money and people and not all that much of any of them."

The President's sceptical regard told Brown that he wasn't convinced.

"You know how the Russians clear a minefield, don't you? They march a company of men through it, right? If Kadhafi used the same technique here, got himself 20 Palestinian commandos willing to expose themselves to more radiation than was good for them for the cause, then the whole thing would become almost terrifyingly simple."

"In six months they could extract enough plutonium from the used fuel rods of a reactor like that to make 20 bombs. In a couple of cow barns where a satellite would never spot them."

The defence secretary sighed. "The PLO gets plenty of commandos to volunteer for suicide raids. Why wouldn't they be able to get 20 of them to volunteer to die of cancer to make a weapon that could destroy Isreal?"

A telephone's buzz interupted Brown. It came from two-thirds of the way across the United States, from Harold Agnew, Director of Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories.

Agnew was one of the few men still alive of the score of scientists who'd been present at the birth of the Atomic Age in a converted squash court under the West Stands of the University of Chicago's Stagg Field on a bitter cold November day in 1942.

When he'd come to Los Alamos with Oppenheimer and Groves to build the first atomic bomb, all the plutonium on planet Earth could fit on the head of a pin with room left for a flight of angels to dance.

And now, Agnew thought moodily? That was a question which had come naturally during the trials of the last hour while a team of his weapons designers had laboured over the blueprint delivered to the White House gate, picking it apart, hunting the one fatal flaw, the one violation of

For its 1732 daily beatings from you,
spare it one good nourishment.
KIWI
BLACK
SHOE POLISH
KIWI

A white wall of light seemed to explode from the screens of Room 2B890. So blindingly luminous was its flash, so painfully intense its glare, the men in the room flinched and shielded their eyes... The President could think of only one thing: John's revelation of Apocalypse: "Behold, a pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."

the very precise rules of nuclear weaponry which would render the design meaningless.

His call was routed to a small white squawk box in the centre of the oval table so everyone in the National Security Council conference room could hear him.

"Mr Agnew," the President declared. "Have your people completed their appraisal of the atomic bomb on those blueprints?"

Agnew's voice filtering into the room seemed strangely hesitant.

"Mr President, the drawing on the blueprint which you submitted to us is not for an atomic bomb."

The men in the White House emitted what seemed an almost collective sigh of relief. The distant scientist did not hear them. He continued:—

"It's my very sad duty to inform you that the design on the blueprint is for something a hundred times worse."

A quick nervous gasp in the distant scientist's voice was audible to each of the men and women in the White House basement. "The blueprint is for a thermo-nuclear device. Mr President, a three megaton hydrogen bomb."

"My God!" the President gasped. "Is this really possible?"

Agnew hesitated. The hydrogen bomb represented the ultimate refinement in Man's search for the means of self-destruction. Unlike the atomic bomb, which depended on converting to reality a widely understood scientific theory, it depended on the most potent secret unlocked by Man's brain since the caveman of Antiquity had harnessed fire.

"I admit it strains credibility, Sir," Agnew replied, "but the blunt fact is this is a viable weapon's design. Whether it's from Kadhafi or someone else, someone, somewhere out there has gotten hold of the secret of the hydrogen bomb."

"Could Kadhafi have gotten the material he'd need to build it?" the stunned Chief Executive asked.

"The design calls for lithium deuteride six as its fuel. To obtain that you could start with lithium chloride, which is a very common chemical. Used in long running batteries. And he'd need a lot of heavy water for his tritum, but that isn't all that hard a thing to get these days. What's vital is the recipe, Mr President, not the ingredients."

The President coughed. "Mr Agnew," he asked, "assuming for the moment this device really existed and really was in New York and really was exploded, what would its effect be?"

"It would mean, Sir, that, for all practical purposes, New York City would be wiped off the face of the earth."

"HEY lady, got room in there for me?

The woman couldn't help smiling at the young Marine waiting to board Eastern Airlines' nine o'clock shuttle from New York to Washington. Laila Dajani was used to men's passes. With her long auburn hair, her black prominent eyes, the slight, sensual pout of her well-fleshed lips, she'd been attracting them since she was 18.

She gave a casual toss to her hair, continued on to the Shuttle Terminal from the plane that had just flown her into the city from the nation's capital.

Her beauty, the way she invariably stood out in a crowd was, she knew, a risk. To deliver her letter to the White House, she'd worn the blonde wig and an old polo coat she'd left in the second locker she had opened at National Airport.

She moved casually to the exit, spotting at the door the darkcoated driver of the limousine service she'd used regularly since she had arrived in New York.

"Nice trip, Ma'm?"

"Lovely, thank you."

Laila settled into the car's comfortable upholstery. As they pulled away, she took out her compact and, pretending to adjust her make-up, scrutinised the traffic behind them in the mirror. They were not, as far as she could tell, being followed.

She sank back into the seat and lit a cigarette. The car, the driver, were a reflection of one of Carlos' golden rules: a smart terrorist always travels first class. The best way to slip undetected about the world, the Venezuelan master terrorist maintained, was in that upper middle class spectrum which lay just below the level of the ostentatious rich, at the very heart of the society he meant to destroy.

The cover he had invented for Laila's two visits to the United States was ideally designed to accomplish just that.

She was on a buying trip for La Rive Gauche, a boutique for wealthy Lebanese on Beirut's Hamra Street, an institution which had survived as such places inevitably do, all the convulsions of the Lebanese Civil War.

Getting a fake Lebanese passport had been simple. Procuring stolen Lebanese passports for Palestinian terrorists was as easy in Beirut as buying postage stamps. Nor did she have the slightest difficulty in getting one of the 200,00 U.S. visas issued annually in the Middle East.

The overworked counsel who'd given her her visa hadn't even bothered to make a phone call to check on her assumed identity; the Rive Gauche letter supporting her application had been enough for him. And so, as Linda Nahar, a Lebanese Christian, she had haunted the showrooms of Bill Blass, Calvin Klein and Oscar de la Renta on her two trips to New York, the first in August, the second beginning in November.

The driver braked to a stop in front of the Hampshire House on Central Park South and, two minutes later, she stepped into the charming disorder of the suite she rented by the month on the 32nd floor.

Moodily, she stepped to the window on to Central Park that constituted one of the sitting-room walls. Looking at the park in its pristine mantle of new snow, at the skaters gliding over the shell to her right, at all these proud facades crawling with blinking pinholes of light, Laila shuddered unavoidably and thought again of Carlos. He was right. Never think of the consequences of your misssion, he'd warned, only of the unexpected problems that could prevent you from carrying it out.

His usually bland features shrouded with concern, the President of the United States stared at the circle of advisers surrounding him. The last great crisis his nation faced when the fanatical supporters of the Ayatollah Khomeini had seized the U. S. embassy in Teheran paled beside this threat.

If this really was true, it was the ultimate act of political terrorism, the almost too inevitable conclusion to a decade of escalating terrorism. And, he reflected bitterly, if it was, a nation whose citizens were living in nomad tents barely a generation ago now possessed the power to destroy the most important city on the planet.

Millions of people are being held hostage, he thought, to one man's extravagant demands. He turned to Jack Eastman. "Jack, what contingency plans do we have to handle something like this?"

It was a question Eastman had anticipated. Locked in a safe in the West Wing were the contingency plans of the U.S. Government, all constantly updated, each wrapped in its black imitation leather jacket. Their origins went back to Henry Kissinger's days. Eastman had reviewed them an hour ago. They dealt with every imaginable world crisis: every one that is, except the one which now confronted the President.

"I am sorry, Sir," Eastman replied. "We don't have any."

If the U.S. had no contingency plan for the threat before the President, it did have an organisation to deal with it. At Los Alamos in Livermore, California, at the old nuclear test ranges beyond Las Vegas, the most important among them, a secret group called

NEST for Nuclear Explosives Search Team was ready to rush scientists and ultra sophisticated detection devices to New York to search for the weapon if it really existed.

In Washington the FBI's Nuclear Emergency Desk had already mobilised thousands of agents and opened contacts with the intelligence services of Britain, France and Germany.

As preparations for a gigantic search of Manhattan began, the President summoned a trio of Air Force communications experts to the White House to analyse how a device, if it really were in Manhattan, could be detonated by long distance remote controls.

"Basically," the senior Air Force colonel told the man in the NSC conference room, "there are two ways to detonate something like this, by telephone or radio." The room was still, all eyes fixed on the speaker.

"To attach the power-pack you'd require for this to the ordinary telephone is very simple matter. Just a question of opening the telephone and connecting a couple of wires.

"An incoming call opens a circuit into a micro-processor in which a pre-programmed code has been stored. The micro-processor automatically compares it with the code and, if the two match, it releases a five volt charge of electricity into the bomb. All a man has to do to explode the bomb is call that number from anywhere in the world and feed his signal."

"It's as easy as that?" the President, jarred, asked.

"Yes, Sir, I am afraid it is."

"Can New York be isolated, absolutely sealed off from all incoming telephone calls?" the President asked.

"No, Sir," the colonel replied. "I am afraid that's a technological impossibility."

He turned authoritatively back to his briefing charts. "It is our judgment, however, that in a situation such as the one we've been given, Kadhafi or a terrorist group would choose radio to detonate the device. It would offer more flexibility and is completely independent of existing communications systems.

For a transmission over this distance, he'd have to use long waves which bounce off the ionosphere and come back down to earth. That means low frequencies."

"How many frequencies would be available to him for something like this?" the President asked.

"From Tripoli to new York, a megahertz. One million cycles."

"One million!" The President rubbed the stub of his chin between his thumb and forefinger. "Could we jam all one million of those frequencies?"

"No, Sir."

"Why?"

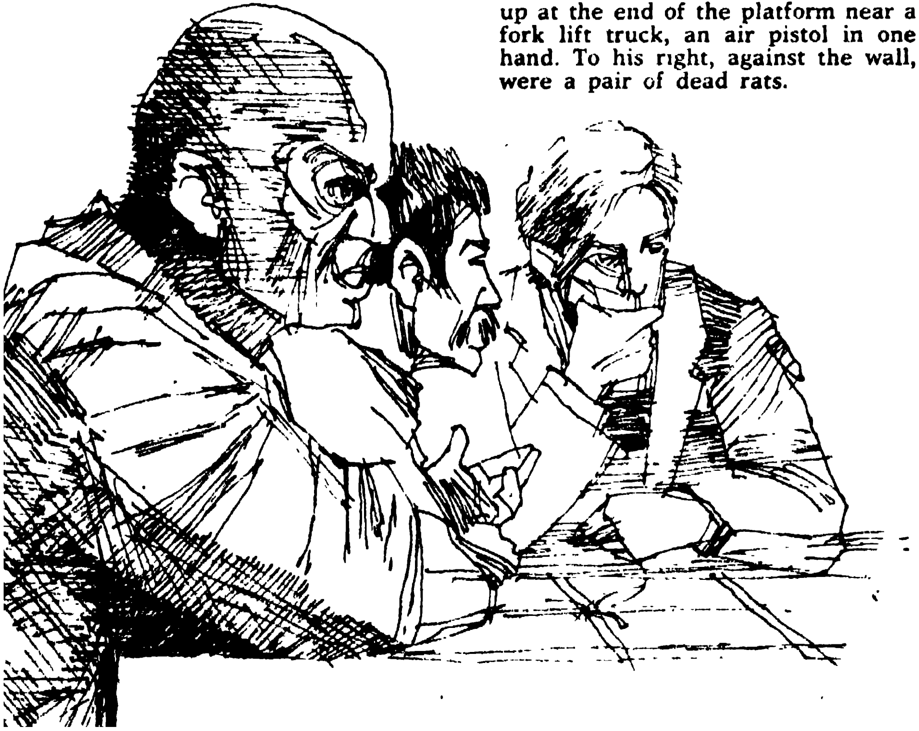
"We simply don't have the transmitter capacity."

As the colonel was speaking, the red light on the telephone at Eastman's elbow flashed. It was the Army Signal Corps warrant officer in charge of the White House switchboard. Eastman stiffened listening to him.

"Mr President," he announced, "the switchboard's just received a telephone message from an anonymous caller. He hung up before they could trace the call. He said there was a message for you of the utmost importance in locker K 602 in the luggage containers next to the Eastern Airlines shuttle Terminal at National airport."

A thin partition separated the garage from the abandoned warehousing are to its rear. Through it, a faint scraping sound drifted into the garage. Laila Dajani shuddered listening to it. It was the sound of scurrying rats.

Her brother, Kamal, sat on a cot set up at the end of the platform near a fork lift truck, an air pistol in one hand. To his right, against the wall, were a pair of dead rats.



Laila's second brother, the eldest of the trio, entered the garage. Whalid Dajani's face was pale; specks of sweat sparkled at his temples.

Laila stirred impatiently. "How much time do we have left?"

"Enough," Kamal answered. He picked a piece of cold pizza from a flat cardboard box by his cot. As he did, his sister noticed the name and address of the restaurant where he'd bought it printed on the carton.

"Are you sure no-one's going to be able to identify you in those places?" she asked.

Kamal gave her an angry glance. The constant boss. "Let's set up our firing circuits," she said.

"Why?" Whalid protested. "We still have plenty of time."

"Because I don't want anything to go wrong."

Whalid sighed and walked over to a grey metal case the size of a large attache case resting on the floor beside his bomb. Nothing could have looked more innocent than that case. Labels from TWA, Lufthansa, half-a-dozen of Europe's best hotels were stuck to it.

One blazing summer's day six nonths earlier, the technical director of the Libyan telephone system had come to Ishui Kamaguchi, the resident director of Nippon Electric, the Japanese firm which had installed Libya's telephones.

What he wanted, he had explained, was a device which would offer a means of remote radio control of an electrical discharge, a system that would be both infallible and absolutely inviolable.

Six weeks later, Kamaguchi had presented the Libyans the case on the garage floor and a bill for £70,000. Only the genius of the Japanese for miniaturisation could have produced the array of fail-safe devices built into the case to frustrate any attempt to tamper with its functioning.

Whalid opened its triple locking system and folded back the case to reveal a pale blue control panel. On it was a cathode tube screen, a keyboard and five keys bearing specific commands. There was also a locked cassette player. Fixed into it was a 30-minute BASF tape, a small red crescent in its upper right hand corner It contained instructions for the case's mini-computer.

The cathode tube screen lit up with a green glow. The words "STAND BY" formed on the screen. Nervously, Whalid rubbed his sweating hands together. Beside him, Laila smoothed out a 16-point check list. He glanced at it, then punched the key marked "INIT!" The word "IDENTIFICATION" appeared on the screen.

Carefully Whalid punched the code 01C2 on to the keyboard. "CORRECT" appeared on the screen. Had his code been wrong the word "INCORRECT" would have appeared there and Whalid would have had exactly 30 seconds to correct his mistake or the case would have auto-destructed.

On the screen, the words "STORAGE DATA" appeared. Whalid looked at the check list in his sister's hands, then punched F19A on to his keyboard. Through the tape player's window he could see the BASF cassette begin to play.

Shortly after 11.30 p.m., the President, riding in the front seat of an unmarked Secret Service car, rode up to the river entrance of the Pentagon. A military policeman led the Chief Executive to a plain white door under an archway bearing the words "Joint Chiefs of Staff". Its only identification was a set of figures, 2B890. Beyond that door lay an Ali Baba's Cave of the electronic age, the most mind-boggling display of technological wizardry of which 20th Century Man is capable, the National Military Command of the United States.

Seated in a leather arm-chair at the oval conference table dominating Room 2B890, the President could, quite literally, watch the world go by. Every communication system the United States possessed every electronic surveillance network, all the vast electronic gadgetry at the disposition of the CIA, the National Security Agency, the Defence Intelligence Agency, all ultimately funnelled into that immaculately white room not much larger than a small movie theatre.

The network of KH-11 satellites girdling the globe could flash on to any of its six movie-sized screens a live television picture of any quarter of the planet.

He could listen, thanks to the CIA, to the sound of men's footsteps walking in certain offices in Moscow, Potsdam and Prague, overhear their most intimate conversations, the clink of their vodka glasses or count the clicks on their telephones as they dialled a number.

And, from that leather armchair, the President could be both a spectator and a participant in the ultimate tragedy. He could order a Minuteman missile launched from its site in South Dakota, then, like a spectator in a movie house, watch on one of the screens before him as the thermonuclear horror he had wrought devastated the people, the streets, the tenements of some Soviet city.

The President settled into that armchair and indicated he was ready to begin. The rear admiral in charge of the centre flicked a series of controls. A stretch of desolate sands reddening in the first light of morning appeared on the screen. At its centre, barely visible, was a tower.

"There, Mr President, is the location we were given on the note that was found at National Airport."

The FBI had plucked the note signalled by the White House's mysterious caller from left luggage locker K602 at the airport. Its contents were spare and simple: at midnight Washington time, in a corner of the Awabari sand sea in the south western corner of Libya, Muammer Kadhafi would provide the United States with a conclusive demonstration of his ability to carry out the threat in his earlier communication.

A second screen lit up. On this one was a detailed resolution of the tower on the first. It was a spindly metal assembly resembling an old fashioned oil drilling rig.

"Harold," the President asked his Defence Secretary, "what do you make of it?"

"It looks a lot like the pictures I've seen of the old 'Trinity' test site." 'Trinity' was the code name for the test of the first atomic bomb in the New Mexico desert in July 1945. "Simple. Primitive. But efficent."

Brown looked at the screen like a professor studying a student's design, hunting for its flaws. "Somewhere around there we should be picking up some sign of the command post he'd use to set this thing off."

"We've swept the area for it, sir," he answered. "Unfortunately, we haven't been able to spot anything."

"Of course you haven't." The voice was that of Delbert Crandell, the Secretary of Energy. "Because there isn't any. That Arab son of a bitch could never do something like this. Two million people. That's all he's got in his country, two million people. They haven't got the knowledge, haven't got the technology, haven't got the infrastructure.

The President ignored him. "What about fall-out?" He asked.

On one of the screens, superimposed over a map of North-East Africa, there appeared a sausage shaped arc thrusting across Southern Libya, Northern Chad, the Sudan and into the southern corner of Saudi Arabia.

"Sir, this is the fallout pattern we're predicting based on the strength and direction of the upper air winds over the site," the admiral replied.

It was one minute to midnight. On the clocks suspended on one wall of the room, the white numbers silently clicked off each passing second.

Harold Brown sensed the President's anguish. "Well, sir," he said, in a voice so soft only the Chief Executive beside him could hear it, "either we have a terrible problem on our hands or the cruellest hoax anyone's ever played on a U.S. Government."

The President continued to gaze straight ahead, concentrating totally on the screens before him. Four precisely aligned zeros appeared on the clock's panels. No one saw them. Every eye was on the screen along the room's far wall.

Five seconds, ten seconds. Nothing happened. Fifteen seconds. Thirty seconds. The first creak of twisting armchairs indicated the tension pent up in the room was easing. Forty-five seconds. One minute.

"I told you he didn't have it." Satisfaction seemed to mix with the sweat sparkling on Crandell's face. "No way he could have..."

He never finished. A white wall of light seemed to explode from the screens of Room 2B890. So blindingly luminous was its flash, so painfully intense its glare, the men in the room flinched and shielded their eyes.

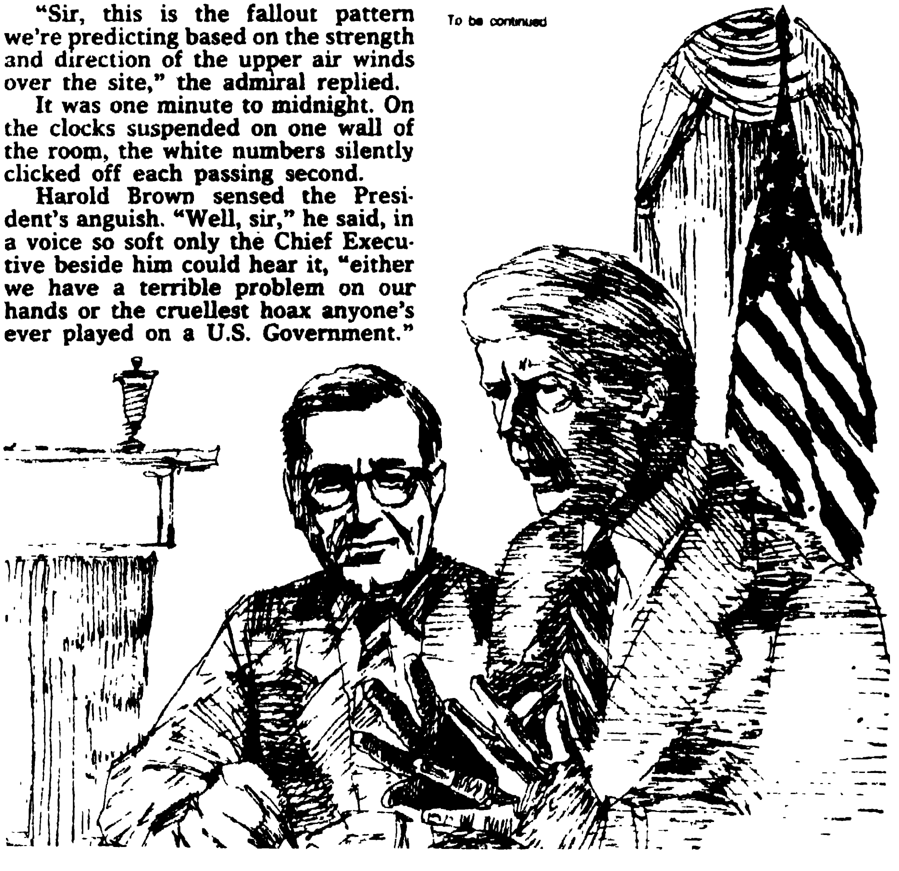
Then, too stunned to react or speak, the two dozen men in the room stared, thanks to their satellite cameras, at a sight no human eye had ever beheld, the bowels of hell, the incandescent heart of a thermo-nuclear explosion.

The President squeezed Harold Brown's forearm in his fingers. He could think of only one thing: John's revelation of the Apocalypse: "Behold, a pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."

Now, he thought, a Fifth Horseman has emerged from the entrails of Hell to scourge humanity with terror, with arms so terrible even John's hallucinating imagination could not have concieved them.

"My God," he whispered to the man beside him. "Oh my God, Harold, how did he ever do it?"

To be continued



The racism of the British makers of *Gandhi*

Indians are called "bloody Indians." And there's little sign of the much-touted foreign finance for the project

Bombay: On 1 March the production of the most expensive (and still quite inaccurate) film made in the country, Sir Richard Attenborough's "biographical" *Gandhi*, almost came apart because of the arrogant racism of the British members of the unit. Nearly sixty Indians on the staff, including some security personnel, were fed with the racist abuses they had to endure from some of the British crew who would constantly spout phrases like "fucking Indians" and "bloody Indians"—and they formally complained to Attenborough, during the shooting in Bombay.

This was not the first time that such a complaint was being made. Earlier, in January, when Attenborough was shooting the Jallianwala Bagh sequence at Delhi's Zakir Hussain College, the Indians on the unit went on a one-day strike when special effects technician Arun Patil was slapped by a British special effects technician called David. Shooting could be resumed only after David handed over a written apology to Patil.

It is little wonder that the Indians have begun referring to Indo-British Films, which is making the movie, as Attenborough's East India Company. The unit has become a hotbed of discrimination—and no one, particularly not the government which has given Attenborough such large dollops of finance, seems to be worried about it. Our government gets upset about the Nationality Bill in Britain, but conveniently turns a blind eye to discrimination against Indians on Indian soil by a bunch of obviously arrogant Britishers.

The big four Indians in the unit are co-producer Rani Dubey, second-unit director Govind Nihalini, associate producer Suresh Jindal and production executive Shama Habibullah, and they are treated well enough, but most of the other Indians have to suffer discrimination in daily allowances, accommodation and general behaviour. Publicity and casting executive Dolly Thakore resigned from the film because she was arbitrarily denied accommodation during the Bombay spell of shooting and work. It was also quite apparent to everyone that leading Indian artistes like Saeed Jaffrey and Roshan Seth were also being constantly humiliated, though they would not, or could not, openly protest. The incident which sparked off the Indian protest on 1 March was simple to the point of being childish—and completely representative of the attitude of some Britishers on the sets. Faiyaz Mulgaonkar, a child who plays Gandhi's youngest son in the film, was being given pastries by his mother during the tea break. Suddenly Jerry Levi, the location manager, accosted her and shouted that she was a greedy hog. She protested that it was her boy who was eating the pastries, and surely he could be forgiven for wanting to eat a couple of pastries at teatime, but Levi continued to rant against her and against the "bloody Indians." Once again, Attenborough had to calm things by getting the Britisher to apologise. What has hurt the Indians most was that they were, as one of them put it, "abused in our own home by foreigners who are behaving as if they are the East India Company."

Attenborough and Rani Dubey would have had to be blind not to see what was going on, and how the Indians were being treated. Even Rani Dubey is said to have expressed her displeasure at the behaviour of some British members of the unit.

Financial problems cropped up for the *Gandhi* project towards the end of February, some three weeks after the unit moved to Bombay from Delhi on 2 February. The much-touted foreign money had not yet become visible till 1 March, though Attenborough is supposed to raise two-thirds of the production cost from abroad. "Where is the foreign money that is to be invested in the film?" asked one unit member in a talk with this correspondent at Bombay adding, "we have not seen it yet. All the money that has been spent so far is the money that the NFDC has given." The financial position was so tight for Indo-British Films by mid-February that there were whispers that the NFDC might be asked for an additional loan, over and above the Rs. 7 crores already promised. At the NFDC, officials have admitted that their inquiries about the film's production are not being answered clearly by Indo-British Films.

The case of a person called Julian Wall is typical of the many mysteries surrounding the production of *Gandhi*. Though Wall is not under contract for the film, and so nobody knows either his function or his salary, he is paid a regular daily allowance of Rs 300. (Indian unit members, apart from the production heads, are paid Rs. 200 per day.) While all British unit members get an overall weekly allowance of Rs 2,550 for personal expenses, Indian unit members get a maximum of Rs 1,400 per week. In some grades, Indian staff members get as little as Rs 200. No Britisher is paid less than Rs 2,550 per week. The entire British unit, when in Bombay, stayed at the posh Searock Hotel but many Indians were kept in a different hotel. The Indians staying at Searock Hotel were asked to share rooms, while all British unit members had a room to themselves. For the security personnel who accompanied the *Gandhi* unit from Delhi, the cruellest fate at Bombay was that they had to find and pay for accommodation themselves. Nor, for that matter, are the security personnel, the car drivers or the other Indian staff being paid any overtime by Indo-British Films, though they have to work long hours from 5 am to 8 pm or later. The Indian staff, hired at far smaller salaries than the Britishers, are naturally angry at this.

Added to the discrimination in money matters is the fact that the

On the sets of Gandhi; *(inset) Rani Dubey*

Indians barring the top people, are generally given a raw deal in the kind of work they are made to do. The assistant directors, for instance, have no creative say at all and are merely reduced to such tasks as translating orders for the crowds or collecting properties. For example Uday Shanker Pani, who had been appointed as the first assistant director when shooting started, has been switched to the production section and has been ordered not to come on the sets. With the exception of Govind Nihalini, who is the second-unit director, no Indian technician has any decision-making authority. As the film has progressed, the retrenchment of the staff has also been disproportionate. While four out of five Indian assistant directors were given notice, commencing from the end of the Bombay schedule in mid-March, only one British assistant director out of the original four has been retrenched.

A Special Correspondent

KARNATAKA

What is Bangarappa up to?

S. Bangarappa

Bangalore: The question uppermost in most minds in Karnataka today is: when will Mr S. Bangarappa be asked to quit the Congress(I)? The question has been uttered on countless platforms numerous times and it has caused waves in the already troubled waters of Karnataka politics.

Political observers feel that it is only a matter of time before a concrete move is taken against the unorthodox former socialist. Already the errant Mr Bangarappa has been issued a notice by Mr Govind P. Voderaj, the Congress(I) Legislature Party secretary, on the instructions of the chief minister, why disciplinary action should not be taken against him.

Mr Gundu Rao wants the party to take action against his former revenue minister merely because Bangarappa wants the ideologies of the Congress(I) to be practised in the state—the implementation of the PM's 20-point programme and the Land Reforms Act. This, Mr Bangarappa feels will not be possible as long as Mr Rao is the CM of the state. Therefore Mr Rao should quit. However, the same political observers feel that Bangarappa's rumblings of discontent has a motive: he is angling for the post of chief minister.

In fact, Bangarappa has gone a step further. In a private conversation with one of his confidants, he is believed to have said that Mr Rao would be out of power soon. And Bangarappa has been taking broadsides at the CM which has caused a lot of embarrassment to his own partymen. In his recent tour of the state he lashed out against the government of Gundu Rao: "The state government is drifting from the professed Congress(I) ideologies...People will slip away from the Congress(I) if chief minister R Gundu Rao is not controlled in time...The present government is hand-in-glove with blackmarketeers and hoarders." All this has upset the Congress(I) and even some of Bangarappa's close associates like G. Y. Krishnan, MP and AICC(I) joint secretary, and Mr C. K. Jaffer Sharief, the minister of state for railways.

But Bangarappa is not the only one to have spoken out against the ruling government. It is well-known that dissidence is rampant in the ruling party. It is also well-known that within the dissidents there are different groups and the chances of all the groups uniting is remote. Meanwhile, it is ironic that while the present government continues to blame opposition leaders for the deteriorating law and order situation in the state, the infighting in the ruling party is making its own contributions to it. Almost every day there are clashes between the supporters of Gundu Rao and Bangarappa.

What is the game that Bangarappa is playing? As long as Bangarappa continues to maintain his power in the district of Shimoga, the rice bowl of Karnataka, he will have a solid base in his party. And most important, he is totally loyal to Mrs Indira Gandhi. But how long will Mrs Gandhi go on tolerating his venomous outbursts against the state government and Gundu Rao? That is something which only time will tell.

Louise Fernandes

FILM INSTITUTE

A president with more power

Pune: Shyam Benegal's appointment as president of the Film and TV Institute (FTII) Society, announced on 5 February, is one of many major changes in the administrative superstructure of the notoriously glamorous film school, at Pune, that have been brought about by the ministry of information and broadcasting, which funds the institute.

Thanks to a change in the FTII society's constitution, Benegal becomes the first president to have effective power over policy and administrative matters at the FTII. He is both president of the FTII Society and chairman of the governing council, which is the real power-wielding body controlling the institute. As a result, Benegal will influence the institute's running to a far greater extent than any of its previous presidents, who were all titular figureheads, since they had no say in the governing council. The FTII society president's real powers were so insignificant in the past that its very first president, the illustrious Satyajit Ray, did not attend a single meeting of the FTII society for the whole of his tenure.

The changes in the constitution, decided in September 1980, are envisaged to re-vitalize the running of the film institute and have been made in line with the recommendations made by a three-man committee set up in 1978. Benegal was offered the prestigious post after veteran Hrishikesh Mukherjee turned it down. The other contenders for the job were Mrinal Sen and Kumar Shahani. Mrinal Sen lost in the race because ministry officials felt that he is not "a responsible committee man." As a nominated member of the erstwhile working group on film policy (1978-80) Mrinal Sen did not attend a single meeting of the group, according to A. K. Dutt, secretary in the ministry of information and broadcasting.

Shyam Benegal

Kumar Shahani, the FTII alumni who made the feature film *Maya Darpan* in 1971, was a far more serious rival to Benegal for the presidentship. Shahani has a considerable following among direction-course students at the institute. With batch-mate Mani Kaul, Shahani is a cult-figure among his young admirers and he figured at the top of a short-list put up by the students for the new president. A few senior members of the teaching staff were also lobbying for Shahani but the fact that he has made only one feature film, and is yet to achieve the eminence that Benegal already enjoys in Indian cinema, led the ministry to turn his name down without much hesitation.

Shahani's supporters among the student-body are extremely unhappy over the final nomination. They complain that the new governing council, which will serve till 30 September 1983, has been converted into Benegal's *Manthan* institute: prominent Benegal associates Govind Nihalini and Shabana Azmi have also been co-opted into the new governing council.

Though no protest-cables were received by the FTII's big-brother guardian, the ministry of information and broadcasting, till 13 February, there has always been a vocal, albeit small, group of direction-course students who have an antipathy to Benegal's film making style, criticising him for the commercial cinema overtones in his films and for his advertising-film background. However, eight days after the new appointments were made public, no protest had been made by any student to the director of the FTII.

One reason given by the ministry for the inclusion of Benegal associates in the governing council is that he was invited as a consultant when it came to nominating the council's members. The other members of the expanding governing council are film-makers Hrishikesh Mukherjee, G. Aravindan, Saeed Mirza and Girish Kasarvalli, actor Naseeruddin Shah, art director Bansi Chandra Gupta, stage director Vijaya Mehta, B. V. Karanth of the National School of Drama, critic Bikram Singh, V. P. Sathe, Vijaya Mulay, M. Kiran Karnik of ISRO, A. A. Chothani of the Anand Dairy Board and a complement of six government of India officials.

More changes in the running of the FTII are in the offing according to A. K. Dutt of the ministry of information and broadcasting. A scheme for rotating members of the teaching faculty is likely to come next.

Anil Saari

Saudis blacklist three Indian firms

Jeddah: Three Indian firms, the Ahmedabad Manufacturing Calico Printing Co Ltd and its subsidiary, the ILAC Ltd—textile export division, Piyush Parikh and Co and Bharatkumar and Co, have been blacklisted along with 100-odd international companies and shipping lines by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Commerce. Their reasons. the Indian firms have business dealings with Israel. The news of the blacklisting has been reported in detail by *Saudi Business*, the country's leading financial magazine. The last two Indian firms, mentioned were found to be exporting Israeli diamonds.

The Saudis have already asked the 40-members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to boycott nations dealing with Israel. If the member-nations heed to their Saudi leader then the boycott weapon will be a formidable one when used en bloc. It had become blunted because it had hitherto been used by individual Islamic countries.

A Special Correspondent

CORRUPTION

Madhya Pradesh text-book bungle

Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh Textbook Corporation, the monopoly publisher of textbooks has in the past provided good stories to scribes regarding the difficulties that school-going students in the state face due to the late arrival of textbooks in the market Once again the Corporation is in the news, this time for an entirely new reason: the colourful activities of one of its top officials. With the support of the education minister, Madhavlal Dube, this former clerk is now trying to grab the topmost position in the Corporation. Its present director, a senior IAS officer, is being eased out the hard way to make way for this man who has good political connections. He is humiliated and insulted in front of his subordinates. He is called to the bungalow of the minister, who is the ex-officio chairman of the Corporation, and made to wait there for hours to get the chairman's signature on the files.

With the director losing his grip over the administration, the Corporation has become a den of corruption. It has virtually been taken over by a gang of swindlers According to the findings of a top-level departmental enquiry, the gang sells paper to printers and prepares false vouchers, sells books and manipulates the accounts accordingly, takes commissions from tranport operators, pays lower wage rates to labourers and gives advantages to the bigger booksellers by giving them books on credit.

The gang leader, none other than the blue-eyed boy of the minister—the former clerk, has of late developed a penchant for travelling to printers of textbooks all over the country.It is reported that in a recent tour he used a government car to take him to a press owner in UP. He was then taken to a bazaar, where the press owner was 'allowed' to make some purchases for him. (Incidentally, it was the same press owner who had earlier charged the Corporation the highest rate for a job entrusted to his press). The whole tour, that included a visit to the hometown of the official was made without the permission of the director and not much was accomplished by way of work for the Corporation.

The officer, now, is reportedly taking a keen interest in building a Rs 20-lakh complex of the Corporation.

It has further succeeded in securing the monopoly rights of manufacturing and distribution of notebooks which implies that the Corporation will not only be in charge of the distribution of textbooks, but of notebooks as well. This has led many to fear that like textbooks, notebooks too will soon be in short supply in the state.

A Special Correspondent

Melbourne's socialite fights for suite

Melbourne: Christmas of 1980 was not one of merrymaking and good cheer for Peter Janson, the racing car driver and owner of the rooftop plush suite of Melbourne's Windsor Hotel. His comfortable existence was shattered by the new lessees of the Windsor Hotel, Hotel Oberoi (International) Pvt Ltd, who served him a notice to quit his rooftop domain—the Towers—by Christmas 1980.

Janson, who has been living in the Towers for the last ten years was naturally irked. He has spent around $350,000 on renovations to give it what he calls "a gentlemanly look." Embellished by his years of collection of trophies, Victorian memorabilia, stuffed animals and birds and several antique objects, Janson's suite almost looks like a museum. But it is not merely a museum. Janson's suite is his empire—he lives there with his pets: a doberman hound, a magpie and a crow. The Towers also hold a lot of memories for Janson for it is the place where he has treated the rich and the famous. Among them are Omar Sharif, the Maharaja of Baroda, Spike Milligan, the former British PM Harold Macmillan, the Marquis of Blandford and his motor racing friends Graham Hill, Stirling Moss and Jackie Stewart.

The issue came up before Mr Justice Gobbo of the Victoria Supreme Court. Mr Janson recalled in the affidavit: "I have had from time to time staying with me at the Towers people of identity. It is my belief that those matters have also added to the attraction and popularity of the Windsor Hotel and has accordingly provided an added benefit to the owners of it." He also stated that the managing director of Windsor Hotels Ltd, Mr Alan Todd, had once promised him that he was entitled to live rent-free in the Towers as long as Windsor remained standing. Mr Justice Gobbo ordered that Oberoi could not throw Janson out of the hotel or do anything like that till further hearing of the summons. Janson has won the first round. He does not think for once that he might lose the second round. All Janson said was, "We think positive."

A Special Correspondent

Americans snub 'intellectuals'

Bombay: The American consul general in Bombay Mr John Malott has virtually accused state finance minister Mr Ramrao Adik of being in the pay of a foreign power. Mr Ramrao, Adik, along with Mr Rajni Patel, Mr Sharad Pawar, Mr R. K. Karanjia, Mr T. Godiwala, Mr Basu Bhattacharya, Mr S. G. Sardesai, Mr S. Y. Kulhatkar, Mr Sukumar Damle, Mr Samuel Augustine, Mr Vithal Chaudhary and other "intellectuals," had last month written a letter to the US President Mr Ronald Reagan accusing former President Carter of a "Mad desire to dominate the developing world and to contain the so-called threat from the Soviet Union" and of bringing "the whole world to the brink of war." They said, "We are afraid Mr President that your policy is being directed towards the same catastrophic objective."

The letter further said "The top leaders and advisers that you have appointed in your cabinet who were once Nixon's notorious hatchetmen, the selection of General Alexander Haig as Secretary of State, Casper Weinberger nicknamed 'Cap the Knife' as Defence Secretary and a host of other hawks, confirms our fears. The sparking of wars in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, their advocacy and even use of nuclear and chemical weapons, opposition to detente and reduction of arms cannot be forgotten."

The letter ended with the "intellectuals" saying "This is the voice of the people of the world" and a listed five demands which included withdrawal of US naval aircraft carriers and rapid deployment force and return of Diego Garcia to Mauritius. The letter was presented to Mr Mallot and he was asked to forward the same to President Reagan.

Mr Malott returned it to the senders with a note which read "I do not concur with the falsehoods and allegations made in this letter and therefore have no intentions of forwarding it to the President. If you like to do so on your own you may purchase stamps of Rs 2.80. I am sure that the country which funds your organisation would be able to spare you the money."

All the "intellectuals" Including the state finance minister Mr Ramrao Adik swallowed this colossal insult of "being funded" by a foreign country which is implicit in Mr Mallot's letter. The "intellectuals" under the banner of the All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation merely sent a one-line statement saying "the US reply is a reflection of its guilty conscience."

Olga Tellis

INDIANS ABROAD

Sikhs pay for mistaken identity

Kansas: Since the past year, but particularly after the release of the hostages, Americans are taking out their pent up frustrations on Iranians. And in the process wrong nationalities are coming under the heat. In the University of Kansas, Americans thrashed up two Pakistanis mistaking them for Iranian immigrants.

Across the nation, Asians, Arabs and Persians are finding it dangerous to wear a beard. People are beating them first; asking questions later.

Indian sikhs are the prime target. Shackled by religious taboos that prevent them from shaving their beards and snipping off their hair, they have no way to conceal their resemblance with Iranians. And they are paying for it. Americans taunt and verbally abuse them. Some throw beer bottles at them. In schools their children have been beaten up by their classmates. Others have people drive up cars beside them and scream "Khomeni!"

In California, where feeling against them run high many complain that they are refused gasoline, services and food. Others have been the target of obscene gestures. A store-owner in Sylmar, Los Angeles complains that

KARNATAKA

Gundu Rao baits the press

Bangalore: "Methinks the man doth protest too much!" This was the instinctive reaction of all those who heard Karnataka chief minister, R. Gundu Rao, in his no-holds barred public condemnation of two of the state's leading dailies on 25 February. This was not the first time that Mr Rao has attacked the press for attempting to discredit and dethrone him. But his lashing out was unique: RGR openly declared war against the *Deccan Herald* and *Prajavani*, the state's largest circulated English and Kannada dailies, published by the Printer's Mysore Limited, naming them for the first time. It may be remembered that the offices of two newspapers had been seiged in September 1980 by the Youth Congress(I) (*Sunday* 2 November 1980).

This time RGR excelled himself in his hour and-a-half speech at the public function organised at Bangalore's Glass House, apparently to felicitate the state minister of co-operation, H. C. Shrikantiah. The CM almost forgot the object of the meeting and launched his tirade against the two newspapers and their proprietors for "publishing lies." He said they were trying to promote their own candidate, S. Bangarappa, for the post of chief minister. Said the CM: "This is impossible in my generation. People will make the chief minister, not they (the newspapers)." Accusing the newspapers of "blackmailing," RGR shouted out to his audience of loyal supporters: "Is it right for the press to write such stories? Is this the duty of the press?" The newspapers deliberately neglected to publish any "good news" about his government.

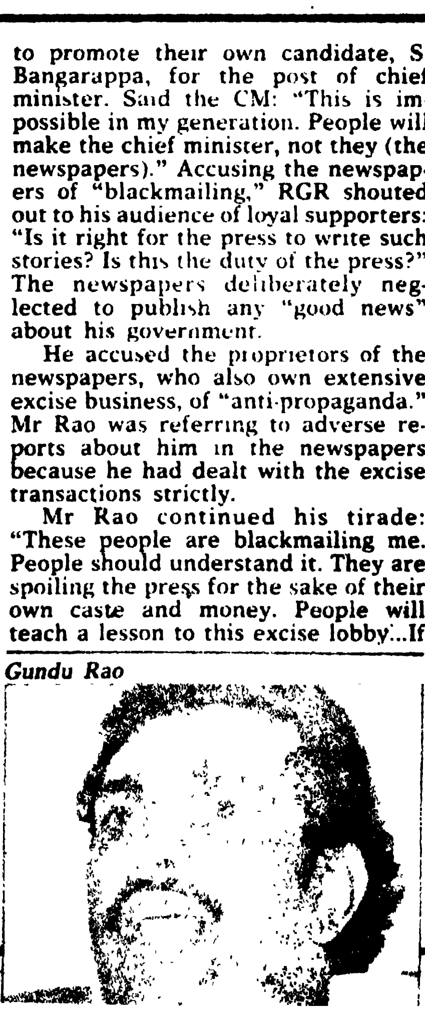
He accused the proprietors of the newspapers, who also own extensive excise business, of "anti-propaganda." Mr Rao was referring to adverse reports about him in the newspapers because he had dealt with the excise transactions strictly.

Mr Rao continued his tirade: "These people are blackmailing me. People should understand it. They are spoiling the press for the sake of their own caste and money. People will teach a lesson to this excise lobby...If **they want to overthrow my government let them contest the elections in 1983. Let them have their own Deccan Herald and Prajavani party. I am prepared to face the challenge. Our party is also prepared to face the challenge," he said gesticulating wildly. And then he warned: "The proprietors will find it impossible to utilise the media for their caste and profession. These kinds of propaganda acts are acts of traitors." Mr Rao's outburst seems to be based on a special branch report that the proprietors of the two newspapers were trying their utmost to make S. Bangarappa the next CM of Karnataka. The other reason for his outburst was the newspapers' reporting on the activities of dissidents in the Congress(I) in the state. The articles had appeared when Mr Bangarappa had spoken out openly against Gundu Rao. There were no dissidents in the state and all that the newspapers had printed were "all lies." He continued: "If they go on writing lies then the day will come when the people and the Congress workers may take out a case against them."**

The words were from the mouth of the same man who standing on the floor of the Karnataka Assembly barely a month ago, had used a report from *Sudha* (a Kannada weekly also published by the Printer's Mysore Ltd) saying it was an excellent example of objective and correct reporting.

Louise Fernandes

Gundu Rao



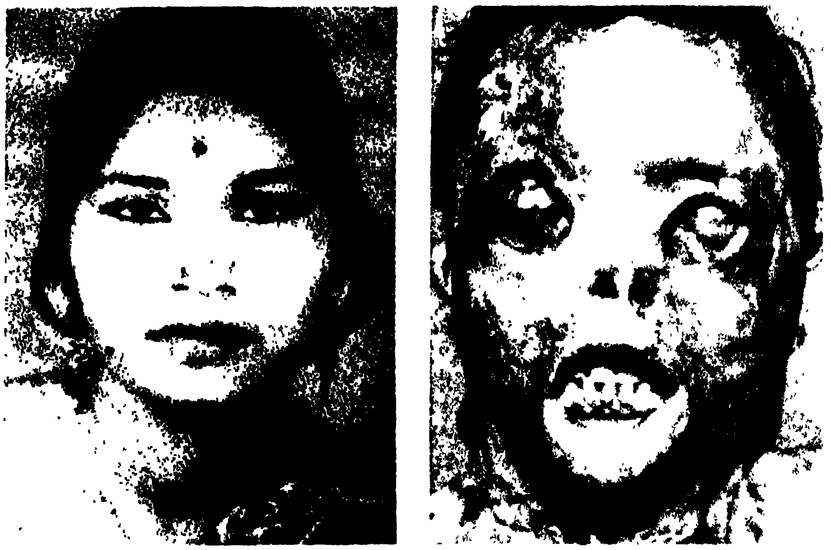
N SUNDARAJ

some clients have wrecked his store and manhandled him. Many complain that they are being discriminated against in jobs. Indeed, many are so scared that they dare not move around at night without an American friend who can explain their background to enraged mobs.

Despite their impressive numbers, there are about 8,000 sikhs in Los Angeles alone, the sikhs are worried at the backlash resulting from no fault of their own. Early in February, a massive campain was launched to educate the American populace of their true heritage. Carrying placards and banners they descended on campuses in Los Angeles to educate the American public.

Meanwhile, even as the Indian sikhs suffer the anger of an inflamed public opinion, the Iranians themselves blend easily into the American society and are hard to distinguish.
Achal Mehra

Stop this barbarity against women!



Mrs Rama as she was and now

Dehra Dun: Mrs Rama, a 25-year-old housewife, was a beautiful woman. She no longer is, thanks to her barbarous and inhuman husband. She had been married for nine years when one fine morning her husband threw acid on her face. A case was instituted; her husband was found guilty and sentenced. But the law could not give her back her beauty.

The Himalayan Health Service Society has stepped in to give her back a small bit of her past looks. This voluntary organisation has decided to provide her with the services of the eminent plastic surgeon, Dr Yogi Aeron, since she has no means of income. The Society is sending out fervent appeals for donations to help Mrs Rama. All donations may be addressed to D. N. Pandey, Secretary, The Himalayan Health Service Society, 1/49 Tagore Colony, Dehra Dun, UP.

FIRST TEST

Once again, irresponsible batting

Wellington: The Maoris are New Zealand's first settlers. Indeed, Kupe—a legendary explorer belonging to this tribe—is reported to have landed in the Wellington area early in 950 AD, whereas land purchase by the British did not commence till 1839. But as is noticeable in most parts of Australia, it is the Anglo-Saxon culture that dominates over South Sea trends, and New Zealand's capital city is another example of this scenario.

When it comes to sports the influence is again quite British although the main inheritance happens to be rugby. Actually, this game of crunching tackles, speedy touchdowns and spectacular conversions is well-nigh an obsession in the country: the people sit up nights and watch live television coverage of goings-on between third parties in far away Europe. In fact, to a great extent, the infection has affected the Maoris and Polynesians too. But not in the same way as cricket. This more lavish and lengthy enterprise—cricket—remains very much a "white" interest.

Of course, it is over-limit cricket that has really caught the imagination of the public here and this was clearly evident from the response to the two one-day internationals that preceded the Wellington engagement. But even in the first test, the crowd in three of the four days was much in excess of expectations. Quite possibly, the reality of India never losing a series to New Zealand and the upgraded amenities after the "face-lift" at the Basin Reserve also contributed to the appeal.Indeed, the only aspect of the Basin Reserve warranting criticism is the condition of the out field, which was treacherously bumpy and caused Yograj Singh an injury on the cheekbone.

Yograj's inclusion in the side set off a minor flutter on the first morning. The replacement of Doshi and Yadav by Ravi Shastri and Kirti Azad was more or less on the cards. And when Ghavri failed to recover from a sprain in the neck, Binny became a logical choice. But the apparent ousting of Yashpal by Yograj was not quite anticipated. Of course, with the progress of the match it became obvious that Kirti and not Yograj had displaced Yashpal, for the former was hardly utilised as a bowler; he sends down fastish off-breaks. What probably swayed the selectors was the greenness of the wicket, demanding in theory, an additional fast bowler. In the event, Yogaj after a decent first spell, in course of which he compelled the batsmen to negotiate his deliveries and picked his only wicket in the match, made no further impression. Binny on the other hand produced his best stint in the entire tour in the New Zealand second innings.

Ravi Shastri

With Shastri still untried, almost the entire burden of bowling New Zealand out twice in a match fell on Kapil Dev. No matter how extraordinary his talents, it is heartless to expect this man to be at his peak in every outing. No bowler in the world can conform to such consistency. Indeed, judging by figures, he did not perform too badly, for he scooped up seven wickets in the match.

The rest of the story was a saga of batting failures with India getting 223 and 190 in their two innings and New Zealand 100 in their second innings, which gave them victory by 62 runs, with a little more than a day to spare.

Wellington is infamous for its gale-force winds and cold climate. In fact, the last time the Indians visited this city—which was under Bishan Bedi in 1976—the temperature was down to six degrees centrigrade—in other words cricket in double sweaters and long johns. On this occasion, though, barring the second day, the breeze was of moderate velocity. Moreover, it was bright and sunny for long periods.

Patil thrives in courting danger

and, therefore, cannot be accused of an unnatural approach when he goes for his shots. Indeed, his record during this tour being what it is, it would be unwise to curb his attacking instincts, for it is precisely such impulse that carried him to top scores of 64 and 42. But Azad, in his first test, could not withstand the pressure, while Kapil Dev stuck to being recklessness personified.

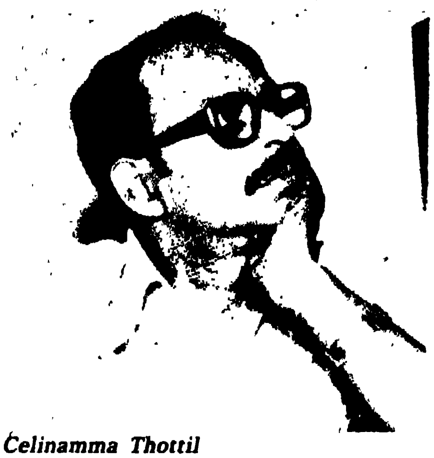
One wonders what kind of an impact the caution and circumspection of the 18-year-old Shastri had on the elders. Arriving in Wellington only hours before the match, this Bombay undergraduate emphasised that he has as much potential as a batsman and as a left-arm spinner. Experience will teach him to throw up the ball in the right arc and turn the ball more and in all likelihood add many more victims to his bag of six in the match.

Lastly, it was interesting to note that New Zealand could bundle out a side in tests without a single wicket being captured by Hadlee—this occured in the first innings and was largely due to Cairns's return of 5 for 33. Even in the fourth innings, this Christchurch fast bowler was far from his fiery and accurate self. But all the same he got four wickets.

So this was a great morale booster for New Zealand. But their fielding remained as efficient and enthusiastic as one had seen in Australia. "The umpires will do you in," an Englishman colleague had warned prior to the journey across the Tasman Sea. What transpired, in fact, was supervision of very high quality, and the early morning vigil by one of the Indian reserves to ensure that the grass was mowed adequately on the fourth day proved a waste of time because the Indians, and no one else, did themselves in.

Ashis Ray

Who is celibate?



Celinamma Thottil

Trivandrum: A Catholic priest goes to a sanatorium in Kerala for religious duties. Later, he meets some of the inmates. One of them is a middle-aged nun, in the advanced stages of TB, in a private ward. The hopelessly sick nun looks at the priest, suddenly takes his hands and places them on her bosom. "I don't know what this craving is," she says gaspingly. "But I want you to feel me..." That was a little more than ten years ago. And the priest, who came from an orthodox religious order, was at first repulsed. But "as he touched the nun's bosom, he couldn't help feeling the thrill. And I kept asking myself, what is it, what is it that makes a terribly sick person demand sexual gratification? What is this celibacy about? Is it really possible to be celibate?"

A few months later, after debating endlessly whether he should remain a priest or not, Rev J. P. Thottil came out of the church and became one of the earliest deserters. His action caused shocks throughout Kerala and brought him instant excommunication. Father of three children, husband of an ex-nun, J. P. Thottil is a favourite of the dissidents. Says the ex-priest: "They tolerate and befriend me for I work for a very powerful and popular daily, the *Malayala Manorama*. Occasionally I give publicity to their work." Thottil has recently published a voluminous history of 264 Popes: the book, in Malayalam has already created a stir in the state. For, "I have written about honest and dishonest Popes," said the author.

"I have not hidden the scandals, specially the anecdotes in the lives of some of the lecherous Popes of the middle and renaissance ages who behaved like tribal chieftains." But the book is far from being soft pornography. "It also deals with the enormous problems faced by the papacy."Wryly he observes: "You ask me who the best Popes are? I'll say without any reservation that the earliest Popes are the greatest and best. That's because we know so very little about them."

Over the last five years there has been a steady worldwide exodus of nuns and priests from the church. "Celibacy is an extremely difficult ideal," says Thottil. "A large number of priests and nuns I've known somehow relieved themselves of sexual tension. Only a microscopic minority had the strength of character to be really celibate." But then he doesn't think that the Catholic Church will reverse its policy on celibacy in the near future.

Arthur Pais

Andhra Pradesh's expensive ministers

Hyderabad: Chief Minister Tangturi Anjiah was visibly irked by the charges of the opposition that he was frequently visiting Delhi. The chief minister declared on the floor of the Assembly on 27 February that no chief minister could function without visiting Delhi. He added that he did not go there to relax in "Ashoka hotel or Akbar hotel" or to watch "dances" but to meet central leaders, officers and others with a view to seeking solutions to the various problems facing the state and its people He stated that he had visited the capital only three or four times from 9 January to 9 February. A Janata Party legislator had, however, criticised the Andhra cabinet for spending half a crore rupees on trunk calls and telephone charges. Was it a fact that the tour expenses and telephone and trunk call charges of the Andhra ministers were higher in 1980-81, compared to 1979-80? Since the state faced economic and political crises all through 1980-81, what was the impact on the state's finances? The answers to these queries were provided by the finance minister, G. Rajaram, in the budget papers submitted in the state Legislature on 27 February. In 1979-80, a total of Rs 60 lakhs was spent on the council of ministers. Rs 60 lakhs were also provide for the council of ministers in the budget estimates of 1980-81. However, the revised estimate for 1980-81 shows an expenditure of Rs one crore on the council of ministers. In the budget estimates, it was assumed that the salaries of ministers would total Rs 18 lakhs in 1980-81 The revised figure stands at Rs 27.37 lakhs. Obviously, the number of ministers is higher than anticipated in the budget estimates. Provision of Rs 9.63 lakhs was made in the budget estimates for the tour expenses of the ministers. The figure has now been revised at Rs 24.33 lakhs. Why did the tour expenses rise so steeply? The answer is obvious. Many ministers, past or present, visited Delhi during the "critical" months on "official work" which was merely to save their "gaddis " The expenditure on telephone charges, maintenance of vehicles, electricity and water charges of the council of ministers was anticipated to be Rs 32.37 lakhs in the budget estimates. The new figure stands at Rs. 48.33 lakhs. The long distance calls could perhaps account for this abnormal rise in expenditure. For the fiscal year 1981-82, the state budget provided for a total expenditure of Rs 113.34 lakhs on the council of ministers. Salaries of ministers and deputy ministers would take away Rs 43 lakhs. Tour expenses would further go up and add upto Rs 30 lakhs. The expenditure on telephone charges and vehicle maintenance etc would go down. The explanatory memorandum on the budget, while offering the explanation for variations in the expenditure on council of ministers, records that "the increase in the revised estimate 1980-81 and budget estimate 1981-82 over budget estimate 1980-81 is due to provision of additional funds consequent on the increase in the *number* of ministers."

Syed Majeedul Hasan

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"I will not let my countrymen down"

Begum Hasina Wazed

Begum Hasina Sheikh Wazed, the 34-year-old eldest daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the former President of Bangladesh, was recently elected President of the Bangladesh Awami League, at a conference in Dacca between 14 and 16 February 1981. She was elected uncontested and in absentia for she has been living in Delhi since 25 August 1975, when she was granted political asylum by the government of India. She and her sister, Rehana, are the only two members of Sheikh Mujib's family to have escaped the bloody assassination of 15 August 1975 when all the family members of the former president were killed.

When **Saumitra Banerjee** *met her at her Pandara Road residence in Delhi, a meeting of the top functionaries of the Awami League was in progress. As all the rooms were occupied, the interview was conducted on the terrace and an apologetic Mrs Wazed said. "One should be careful about not offending the members of the press, but I am helpless. A historic meeting is in progress."*

Q: Why have you been chosen the president of the Bangladesh Awami League, in spite of the fact that you have been away from Bangladesh and have little or no political experience?

A: I have been made the president because I am Bangabandhu's (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's) daughter—and this is the only reason. I am just a common girl, but the fact that I have been made the president of the Awami League is actually a reflection of the tremendous respect the people of Bangladesh have for Bangabandhu. This is just another way of showing their gratitude to a person who has done so much for the country. As his daughter, I symbolise all that he stood for. They (the people of Bangladesh) had received a lot of love and affection from my father. They now expect the same love and affection from me. The honour (of being made the president of the Awami League) I have received, is actually another way of honouring Bangabandhu.

Q: What kind of political experience have you had in the past?

A: Ever since I was born I have been exposed to politics: I have closely followed all my father's political activities. I remember whenever my father went to jail, I used to prepare a cup of tea for him and pack his suitcase before he was taken away. Politics is and always will be a part of my life. Besides, I was vice-president of the college union and had organised the Chhatra League. During the movement (Bangladesh's liberation struggle in 1971) I was very active. So, besides the exposure, I have also been involved actively in politics.

Q: What has the reaction been in Bangladesh to your election as president of the Awami League?

A: I have not seen it myself, but this is what has been told to me by people who frequently come to Delhi from Bangladesh. They (the people who came to Delhi after Hasina Sheikh got elected) say that the councillors of the Awami League started crying when they heard that I had been elected. As for the common man, people like rickshaw pullers and other menial workers, they were so happy that they even distributed sweets among themselves, and some even prayed. It is very difficult to express the joy I felt when I heard that the people of my country were so happy at my election.

Q: How did President Zia react to this?

A: There has been no immediate reaction, but he has always been harassing people from the Awami League. He has arrested many of our workers and has also murdered a large number of them—some secretly and some openly. He has been trying for a long time now to break up the party but has not been successful because the party has a mass base.

Q: How popular is the Awami League now?

A: It is the only popular party in Bangladesh. It has its roots in the villages, which no other party can boast of. We have the support of the common man, the people who matter, not just a few people at the top.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: My father had always fought for the rights of the people, to better the condition of the masses, and to drive away poverty from the lives of the people. In short, to remove sorrow from the lives of the people in our country. That is what I want to do. If I achieve this, then only will I feel that I have done something for the people of my country, that I have completed my task. This is also what the people of the country expect from me and I will not let them down.

Q: When do you plan to go to Bangladesh?

A: Soon. But the date has not been fixed as yet. You see, I have been staying here (Delhi) for a very long time and I must clear up a lot of things before I leave. Besides, my children are small and are studying. So some arrangements have to be made before I leave and this will take some time.

Q: Where were you at the time of the 1975 coup in Bangladesh, when Bangabandhu was assassinated?

A: On that day (15 August), I was in Belgium. But at the end of July 1975 I had left Bangladesh for West Germany, where my husband was working. After the incident, I came to Delhi on 25 August, when the government of India gave me and my family political asylum.

Q: Could the Indian government have anticipated the coup and saved Bangabandhu?

A: What has happened has happened. I would not like to comment.

Q: What do you think about the present Indo-Bangladesh relations?

A: There is a lot of room for improvement. India and Bangladesh should have better relations as India helped Bangladesh during the independence movement. Not just that, India has been helping Bangladesh subsequently also. Besides, we are a poor country. How can we fight with other countries. We have to be friendly with all countries.

Q: What are your present tasks?

A: The first thing that has to be done is to punish all those involved in the incident of 15 August 1975. A commission had been set up to look into the incident, but the members were not allowed to enter the country. Again, all those who were guilty have been given diplomatic assignments and comfortable jobs. The first thing that I demand is justice.

Q: Has there been any communication between you and the Indian government since you were elected?

A: No. Why should that happen? This is an internal affair of our country, so there is no reason why the government of India should react.

Q: What are your views about the present government in Bangladesh?

A: Actually, I cannot comment on this as I shall have to consult the members of the presidium before I say anything. We have a very democratic way of functioning in our party. There are twelve members of the presidium and they together decide policies and the line the party has to adopt. ■

Beethoven's homosexual affairs

Current research has thrown new light on the maestro's personality, says Kishore Chatterjee

Beethoven

For most people who love Beethoven's music and know a little about his life, Karl Beethoven, his nephew, will always be that "wretched Karl," a good for nothing boy who made the last 12 years of the composer's life miserable with endless lawsuits, quarrels, intrigues and even an attempted suicide. Successive generations of biographers have dismissed this relationship as Beethoven's final folly, the mental aberration of a mighty spirit.

In fact Anton Schindler, Beethoven's secretary and lifelong friend, the man chiefly responsible for the romantic *Moonlight Sonata* image of the composer, went so far as to destroy the conversation books relating to the subject of Karl. (Beethoven being totally deaf towards the end of his life had to use pen and paper to carry on even daily conversations.) Schindler was possibly motivated by shock and the fear of the world discovering an aspect of Beethoven totally unlike the romantic image he was building up in his biography.

But modern researchers have proved conclusively, that far from being a folly, Beethoven's last and perhaps greatest love affair was totally in keeping with his character, the long repressed craving of a lonely bachelor for love and intimacy with at least one human being, responsible as much for his silent period (1812-1817—during which he was fighting in court to gain custody of Karl and for which the world has never forgiven the boy) as it was for his profound last period, of the *Ninth Symphony*, the *Missa Solemnis* and the *Last Quartets*, music that speak of a peace beyond understanding.

Karl Beethoven came into the master's life when the great composer was 45, a very famous and very lonely man, almost totally deaf and isolated from the world desperately, almost unconsciously, seeking a spark that would set off his superhuman creative capabilities. This spark or spiritual crisis was necessary for Beethoven's psyche for his greatest moments, His magnificent Middle Period which saw the birth of the *Eroica*, the *Fifth Symphony* and *Pastoral* amongst others in a row had followed his desperate struggle against deafness, an act of God he could not comprehend. And now he was to face his second great spiritual crisis, his uncontrollable longing for possessing the boy Karl, body and soul. It was a dramatic clash between a genius and a boy. Sometimes the genius was loving and indulgent, sometimes he reared up and became terrible in his greatness, standing up to the boy whose strength lay only in his youth, his beauty and his lack of love. Beethoven wrote, "I was never so great as when I brought my nephew to me and busied myself with his education—through my nephew I wish to raise a new monument to my name."

Carl Beethoven

Of course in the true spirit of a confirmed loner and a clumsy lover he went about the conquest of Karl like a drunk bull in a china shop. The first to fall was Karl's father who died leaving the boy in the custody of Beethoven and his mother. Beethoven who by now was totally paranoid, suspecting everything and everyone was convinced that his brother had been poisoned by his wife and insisted on an autopsy. He then went to fight a long drawn-out legal battle for the custody of Karl, snatching the boy away ultimately from his mother, whom Beethoven disliked more than any other person with the hatred of a lover for a rival.

He ultimately got the boy, his companionship, his physical nearness, but never his love. For the boy could never forgive Beethoven for snatching him away from his mother. Because of this, Beethoven's nephew was his profoundest emotional experience and the greatest tragedy of his life. On July 20 1820, Beethoven finally won the case, and a reluctant Karl, then a boy of 14, came to live in his famous uncle's house, confused and scared and more than a little afraid of his strange uncle, for whom this young and beautiful body like a Michaelangelo sculpture had become a living form, more real than a symphony, more scintillating than a concerto, more pathetic than a sonata.

Almost without exception Beethoven's biographers have blamed Karl for what followed, without realising that for a young boy and late man (Karl was 21 when Beethoven died) of ordinary sensitivity, with interest in mischief, wine, women and cards, living with Beethoven must have been torture worse than death. Karl confessed later in court after his unsuccessful attempt at suicide, that he grew steadily worse because his uncle wanted him to get better. For Beethoven, Karl was no ordinary boy, but an act of God, the supreme sacrifice to his altar of creativity. "May God hear my prayer," wrote Beethoven, "allow me to live only with my boy Karl." Beethoven made him learn the piano and insisted he prayed regularly.

Even musically Karl was unlucky, for his uncle's music had long left the romantic pathway of the *Violin Concerto* and had entered its final, incomprehensible spiritual period. As Beethoven's music moved into regions of consciousness to which no music before or after him has travelled, his daily habits became more and more impossible. He was now totally deaf, intensely suspicious and completely paranoid about threats and obsessive visions concerning Karl. Poor Beethoven was always afraid of losing the ■

only living object that he had ever truly loved.

He not only watched over Karl's studies but tried to be guardian of his heart and sexuality. "For the love of you I am the button of your trousers," he wrote in his conversation books. Karl's reply is not recorded but the fact that he ran away again from Beethoven and confessed later in court that his uncle, once in rage had dragged him away from a chair and hurt him 'in the most delicate place' proves beyond doubt that Beethoven's jealousy sometimes made him act on impluse that he later regretted. "Sensual enjoyment without a union of soul is and will remain a bestial act," he wrote in his diary. Beethoven always loved the boy's body, but what pained and tortured him was that he was pretty sure that the boy never did. Here is an excerpt from one of Beethoven's letters after their typical and frequent quarrels, Karl sulking and staying away, Beethoven only too ready to forget and forgive. "Come into my arms, you shall have no harsh words there. Do not abandon yourself to your misery. For the love of God come home today. From me you can expect the most loving care and help. Come, come then to my faithful heart..."

There was only one logical end to this disastrous love affair. Karl, desperate and utterly bored by Beethoven's overpowering possessiveness tried to kill himself. He was rushed to hospital and from there to court, and Beethoven's name linked with Karl in a manner that left no doubt about their relationship. Beethoven was grief-stricken and aged almost 20 years overnight. He, of course, forgave Karl, saying it was his "mother's blood after all," and moved with Karl to his brother Johann's estate in Gneixendorf to play out the final postcript to the affair. Beethoven was now poor but still he refused to touch the legacy he had kept aside for Karl. On the contrary he tried to persuade Johann to leave his money and estate to Karl, naturally without success for by then everyone had written off Beethoven as being insane with love. In fact Johann's refusal to take a love-me-love-my-dog attitude to Karl made Beethoven leave the estate in a huff in bitterly cold December.

An excerpt from a conversation book reveals the attitude of the adult Karl, whose life with this wild man had lost every spark of gratitude and to whom Beethoven's affection was growing unendurable. It was the end of their stay at Gneixendorf, Beethoven is trying to persuade Karl to return with him to Vienna. The words are Karl's. "If you want to go good, if not good again. But I entreat you once more not to torment me as you are doing. You might regret it. For I can endure much, but not too much. You must remember that other poeple are also human beings...I only want to be alone for a little while. Will you not let me go to my room?"

On the journey back to Vienna, Beethoven caught a severe chill. One complication led to another and within three months Beethoven was dead. A few months before his death Karl had left home to join the army. He never saw Beethoven alive again and in fact arrived too late for the funeral.

It is easy to dismiss Beethoven's love for his nephew as an outburst of latent homosexuality. In so far as his greatest love was of the same sex it could be termed that. In a way everything that had happened to Beethoven before Karl entered his life, had logically led him to the last act. It was typical of Beethoven, the loner, that the only living object he ever wanted to possess completely body and soul should be totally beyond his reach. But then, wasn't he also the musician who was stone deaf? ■

Men around the maestro

Carl Holz

Gerhard von Breuning

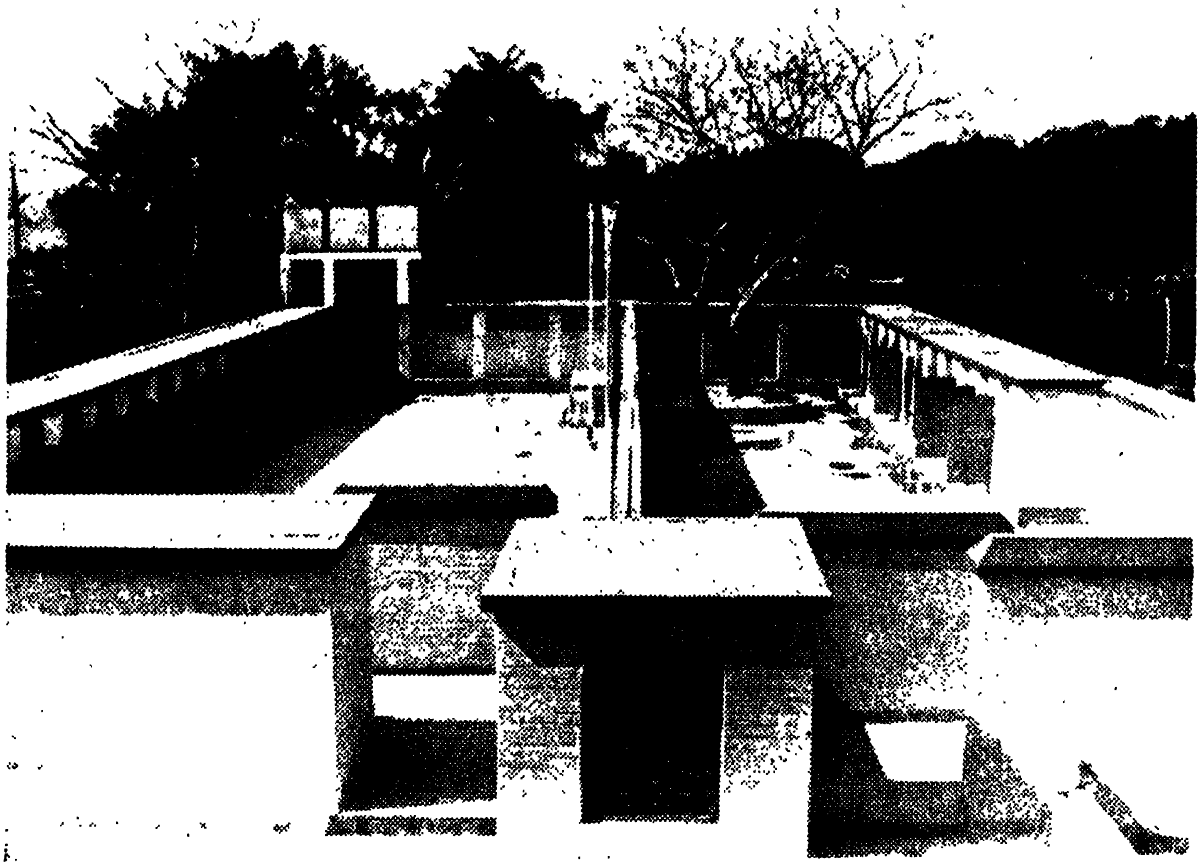
Anton Schindler

There is no doubt that the man who wrote the Moonlight Sonata and has the popular image of the romantic bachelor with an 'immortal beloved' tucked away in every palace bedroom was in fact much more at home in male company. Beethoven was in fact very much a man's man. This was not entirely because he got into his head that his deafness was due to syphilis and forced a life of celibacy upon himself. It's just that his angularities, his mounting paranoia and uncouth, dirty habits could only be tolerated by men who forgave the facade for the fundamentals. Beethoven's greatest experiences have been centred around men. After his first discovery of deafness, Beethoven wrote a prose poem called *The Heiligenstadt Testament*, comparable in its morbidity to Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*. He dedicated it to his two brothers Carl and Johann, who were incapable of understanding its sentiments. Beethoven hated both his sisters-in-law and missed no opportunity to poison his brothers against the wives.

Apart from Karl, his most intimate moments were shared by a young cellist called Carl Holz, referred to as "Mephistopheles" by Beethoven's admirers for having dragged the composer down the the evil path. Beethoven had a life long love-hate relationship with Anton Schindler, his first biographer. Schindler claimed that he knew Beethoven more intimately than any woman. Beethoven longed for the company of young boys. He became extremely fond of Gerhard the 12-year-old son of his friend Stephen Von Breuning, whom he nicknamed "trouser button". In his last days when his wild and uncouth manners had driven everyone away,a young peasant boy Michael Krenn kept Beethoven company and has left an interesting account of how the master composed his last quartets.

Ironically, none of the men Beethoven loved were at his bedside to close his eyes on 26 March 1827. It was a woman who performed that rite, his ancient lifelong enemy, sister-in-law Therese.

"Sulabh" in Calcutta



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THE WORLD

Tarzan under fire

Richard Harris

V. R. Nanayakkar, Sri Lanka's conservator of forest, will soon declare war on Tarzan. He is planning to sue Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) for causing damage to virgin jungle near Kandy where the Hollywood-based film company is shooting a Tarzan film. Mr Nanayakkar is hoping to get Rs 300,000 as compensation. The film stars British actor Richard Harris as Tarzan and America's latest sex symbol Bo Derek as Jane.

Bo Derek

Trial in Turkey

Professor Necmettin Erbakan, former deputy Prime Minister of Turkey and leader of the ultra-Islamic National Salvation Party (NSP), will soon be put on trial along with 33 fellow partymen on charges of attempting to establish a theocracy in Turkey The NSP was founded in 1972 and obtained less than 12 per cent of the votes in the 1973 elections and 8 per cent in 1977. Professor Erbakan had made no secret of his distaste for the secular legacy of modern Turkey's founder, Kemal Ataturk; he made no effort to come to terms with the republic If convicted, Erbakan may face up to 36 years in prison.

US Nazi housewife

Mrs Hermine Ryan, before her extradition to West Germany, where she is now facing charges of war crimes, was born in Vienna. She married an American in 1958 and lived in New York till 1973. During World War II she worked as a guard at the Majdanek concentration camp in occupied Poland where, according to a recent claim by a West German prosecutor, she "was one of the best-known and best-noted overseers." According to testimony presented at a Dusseldorf court on 24 February this year, Mrs Ryan had served in four Nazi concentration camps between 1939 and 1945. She was known to the inmates as "the stamping mare" because of her habit of trampling prisoners with steel-studded boots.

Spectacular jail-break

The most spectacular jail-break in recent history took place at Fleqrymerogis prison in France on 28 February this year. A helicopter, hijacked by two unidentified men from a heliport at Issy les Moulineau, landed in the centre of the prison, picked up two convicts and flew away. Prison guards sounded the alarm, police helicopters took off instantly and what followed was almost a hair-raising sequence from a Hollywood thriller. But the "cops-and-robbers chase" did not last long; the hijacked chopper disappeared and was later found near a Paris suburb. The prisoners and their two rescuers had vanished.

More of the Shah

Shah's estate building

Part of the former Shah of Iran's vast property, including a private airport in Surrey (England), has been sold for two million dollars. This money will soon be handed over to widow Farah and eldest son Reza Pehalvi.

Pakistan's nuclear agents

Three citizens of Montreal (Canada) were put on trial at Quebec's sessions court on 27 February on charges of illegally shipping electronic equipment to enrich uranium in Pakistan. Judge Gilbert Monier ordered the accused to return on 28 April for further hearings.

Lennon's fortune

The late pop star John Lennon's total assets in England and Wales have been valued at $ 1.3 million which is actually just a fraction of his total fortune. By conservative estimates, his widow Yoko Ono and 18-year-old-son Julian will inherit something to the tune of $ 275 million.

Sextuplets?

Controversy surrounds the widely-publicised birth of healthy sextuplets to Mrs Charmaine Craig of Windhoek (South Africa). The two Johannesburg papers which reported the births, claimed that the sixth child was born 23 days after the other five because Mrs Craig was suffering from gynaecological problems. But, when a reporter visited her subsequently, Mrs Craig told him: "Please... I cannot say where they (the sextuplets) are... I don't know. You must ask someone who knows." So everyone is in a fix about the six.

Making sense in Iran

"Tomorrow will be too late," said Ayatollah Khomeini's son, Ahmad, in a written appeal for tolerance to the Iranian Majlis (Parliament) recently. His letter was prompted by the incidents of violence on the Caspian Sea coast on 14 February: Islamic extremists, armed with knives, sticks, pistols and rifles, disrupted a rally led by Majlis deputy Hassan Lahuti, fired at his car and held him prisoner for two hours. It was another showdown between the Islamic fundamentalists and the followers of President Bani-sadr. Severely critical of Islamic militants in his letter, Ahmad Khomeini referred to them as "club-wielders" and added, "If you do not stamp out club-wielding today, tomorrow will be too late." The term "club-wielder" in Iran is usually reserved for members of the Hezbollah (party of god) group, which frequently resorts to violence against those Iranians who are not "sufficiently Islamic" in their beliefs.

Ahmad Khomeini

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GOOD NEWS

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ey (In search of famine) India's
al competitive entry to the 31st
n International Film Festival, was
ured with the special jury prize of
Silver Bear. Besides the Silver
r, the film also won the Interna-
ıal Protestant Film Jury (INTER-
LM) award of 1,500 DM and the
ternational Catholic Film Organisa-
n award for its "humanitarian
proach." Present at the prizegiving
remony at Zoo Palast were the film's
oducer D. K. Chakraborty, and lead
ayers Smita Patil and Dhritiman
Chatterjee. *Akaler Shandhaney* has yet to be commercially released in India; it was, however, included in the Indian panorama at the eighth film fete in Delhi this year.

Mrinal Sen directing Akaler Shandhaney

CHITRAJIT GHOSH

Controlled price

Perhaps the best part of finance minister Venkatraman's budget proposals is the indication that controlled cloth prices will not be allowed to go up. Controlled cloth, used primarily by the weaker sections will be subsidised by the additional excise duty of 10-15 per cent on all textiles. This means the better-off consumer will have to foot the subsidy which textile manufacturers will pass on to the consumer. The self-financing of the controlled cloth scheme was started by George Fernandes in 1978 when he was union minister for industries. The revenue from would meet the expenditure incurred by way of subsidy on controlled cloth. With Mr Venkataraman's additional 10-15 per cent levy, the provision for subsidy would rise to nearly Rs 100 crores, netting around Rs 33 crores to help finance the increased outlay oncontrolled cloth. The average cost of production of controlled cloth is calculated to be Rs 3.92 per metre. The government provides a subsidy of Rs 1.92 per metre, enabling the sale of controlled cloth to consumers at Rs two per metre on an average.

Keeping well

Daljit Singh (40), formerly Bihar's and East Zone's agile man behind the stumps, is doing commendable work—outside the cricket field. He is the manager for community development and social welfare and secretary of the rural development society of Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), Jamshedpur. His organisations have undertaken projects all around the steel city to uplift the tribals and other depressed sections. Singh is conducting rural projects of agricultural extension, animal husbandry, village and cottage industries, horticulture, forestry and other welfare activities including health and family planning in 150 villages in the Singbhum district on a five-year budget of Rs 1.5 crore. The most interesting of these projects is an "action plan for communal harmony"—a necessity in Jamshedpur, which saw an ugly communal holocaust in 1979. Men, women and children from all communities are invited to programmes like *Id-Deepawali milan, Samuday milan, Id-Rakhi milan and Id-Dussehera milan* where they play ingenious games whose les
are clear: no results are possib
out love and cooperation—RITLAL

Seeing through dust

Three scientists of the Institute of Science, Bombay have successfully used simple gadgets for gauging dust pollution. This is the second triumph for Dr S. B. Chapekar, Associate Professor of Ecology, D. B. Boralkar and Mr R. P. Shetya who had earlier successfully used simple garden plants to determine the geographical distribution and intensity of industrial pollution in Bombay.

Their three-year quest with polythene cups, polythene beakers and glass plates blossomed into a scientific breakthrough which confirmed that these simple tools were reliable instruments for estimating dust pollution, a growing menace in many cities.

In addition to these tools, the scientists experimented painstakingly with the use of plants for the first time in India as agents for monitoring pollution. According to one report, few leaves were collected from garden plants and washed and dried clean with a filter paper. They were then placed horizontally and allowed to capture gravitationally falling cement dust dispersed in the air through blowers. After the dust was allowed to settle for a while, the leaves were carefully washed into a beaker with a jet of distilled water. The scientists found that the amount of dustfall on leaves was slightly higher than in the controls and differed among themselves. Even under field conditions such differences were noticeable. With the readings, widely varying the scientists had to find out why this was so. Experiments continued on three species of plants namely, Thespesea Populnea, Croton and Merabilis Jalapar. Prolonged investigation revealed that when the horisontal leaf was suspended vertically, some of the captured dust was lost by the leaf surfaces giving low value of captured dustfall. It was also seen that Mirabilis leaves showed a tendency for higher dust-capture while Thespesea leaves showed the highest retention of dust and Croton leaves lost the maximum amount of dust that had fallen on them. With a further study of these results the scientists finally arrived at the kind of leaf that would be best suited to to monitor dust pollution.

KHAAS BAAT

DURGAPRASAD

Ranjeeta: spaced out?

One star who buckled under the filmi pressure is *Ranjeeta*. The only student of the FTII to be offered a film while still in the institute did not get much by way of special treatment on the sets. Who did she turn to? Well apparently chivalry was on the wane, so the poor girl turned to drugs and drinks, which perhaps account for her slurry speech and out-of-focus eyes.

Dara Singh's latest find, *Binny Rak* is drawing a lot of wows. Whether she can act or not, is of course an entirely different question. But then, who said Dara needs good actresses for the films he produces. For all his Punjabi films—most of them superhits—he had only very pretty heroines like *Vimi* and *Komilla Wirk*. And now its Binny Rak from London who has been chosen for Dara's new venture *Rustom*, probably inspired by Muhammad Ali's *The Greatest*. She might turn out to be a lucky girl provided her un-Indian looks and Anglicised style does not buckle under the local filmi pressures.

By the look of things, *Shailendra Singh*—he made his debut as a singer in *Bobby* and later took to acting—plans to join the wrestlers. With the amount of weight and muscles that he has acquired, he is no longer the same chocolate-pudding man he used to be. We only hope that his petite Bengali wife, *Mridula Bose*, has no hand in it.

Male directors beware! Your realm is slowly being invaded by women. Since *Sashi Kapoor* gave a break to *Aparna Sen* to direct the all-female cast film *36 Chowringhee Lane*, *Simi* is now declaring she wants to direct a film. Who knows what that will turn out to be? Let's keep our fingers crossed, the film might be a very artistic one indeed.

Zeenat has adopted this famous stance of hers. Nowadays she feigns indifference whenever someone comes to tell her about her affairs with all the eligible and good-looking men who woo her. Poor Zeenat what else can she do? For there are some people who come to her with stories about her ex-husband, *Sanjay*. But I cannot understand why these heartless people want to torture our girl Zeenat. Don't they realise that she has had enough of sadness in her life.

Zeenat:a still from Pyaas

TAPAS ROY

Rekha:eyeing the beautiful?

Rekha is on the prowl. She has now put none other than the handsome sarod maestro *Amjad Ali Khan* on her radar. And people concerned are hoping that all is well on the musician's home front, for the way Rekha wraps herself around his aura while he performs and the way he looks at her during his performance make people think he is only playing for her. And Rekha's reasons are good: her self-confessed weakness for beautiful people. Poor Rekha, doesn't she know that the maestro is happily married?

The *Bachchans*, we mean that famous duo *Jaya* and *Amitabh*, have come out of their shells. They had almost been forgotten for they were hardly ever seen in public as the loving couple they used to be. Whether Amitabh was too busy is not known. But now they can be seen around town. He-man Bachchan has dug out his famous churidars and the expensive shawl and Jaya is once again the happy lady she used to be. She no longer looks gaunt and scared. We hope this loving relationship is not a show to be kept up till the *Silsila* hoardings appear.

Hema Malini is not going to let people forget her so easily. After husband *Dharmendra*'s much talked of activities as director and producer, Hema is all set to show the film industry that she is equal to her husband, if not better than him. Hema is now planning to direct her own movie.

KHAAS BAAT

Raji: they like me as I am

The gossip mills churned out the rumours over a year ago that *Sathyakala* had been cast as the heroine of a election special movie *MGR* wanted to make. The movie was aborted. Then she was signed by director *Durai* for *Thanimaram* and two other films. She has naturally been keeping her fingers crossed, hoping they would be hits. But her career still seems to be lurking in the doldrums. And her old mentor Durai is more interested in signing up *Roopa* and *Menaka*.

Saritha looks desperate after her Tamil superflop *Enga Ooru Kannagi*, directed by her mentor *K. Balachander*. True, her *Maro Charitra* continues to be a box office hit, even two years after its release, but that was in Telugu and Saritha desperately wants a superhit in Tamil to her name.

Superstar *Rajnikant* has for once shown better judgement. Instead of the usual 'haven't we met before', he asked her what she was doing with a guitar round her neck. The sprightly college girl shot back, "Of course I play the guitar and sing too." And she played the guitar and sang too—the old Beatles' favourite—*I wanna hold your hand.* She must have sung with real feeling, for she was not let down. Friendship blossomed into a very secret romance. And while others were busy talking about Rajnikant and *Rati*, the hero quietly married *Latha* at the Tirupati temple. When a couple of friends called in to verify the news, a tongue-in-the-cheek Rajnikant said, "Well I'm sorry, I have lost your telephone numbers, I have lost your addresses too... So I thought you'd read the item in newspapers and congratulate me." They did, and marvelled at the star's secretiveness.

The latest from *Srividya:* "I never take them (gossip writers) seriously. Nor do I take the gossip mongers in the film industry seriously." She sure sounds serious, which she probably is, about her enlightened approach to the whole thing. And there is more: "Whenever I feel ill, there are rumours that I'm being bashed up by my husband. I smile a little sadly though, when I hear those rumours. For I feel that the people who spread such stories must be a very, disappointed lot." Sounds like the actress has found the medicine for real happiness. We only hope she can keep on using it!

First it was *Radha Saluja.* She acted in two hit films made in the South. The credit was bagged by *MGR* and Radha disappeared into oblivion. And now, by the look of things, *Gayatri Sharma* of *Tapasya* fame is on her way to oblivion too. She played a major role in *Vasantha Geetha,* which later turned out to be a big Kannada hit, but then it was, as the trade calls, an out-and-out hero oriented film, the hero being none other than *Rajkumar.* Moral of the story: Bombay stars stay away from the South.

PIOUSJI

Rajnikant: before or after?

Radha Saluja: drifting into oblivion

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wife, M
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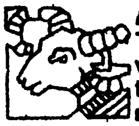
Beginning 15 March

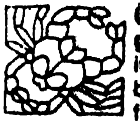
This week the Sun and Mars are in Pieces, Mercury is in Aquarius, Jupiter and Saturn are in Virgo, Rahu is in Cancer and Ketu is in Capricorn. The Moon will be moving through Cancer, Leo and Virgo from Gemini.



Aries (15 April—14 May) The first two days of this week are particularly favourable for you. You will make steady progress on your professional front. Domestic affairs are well signified as well. Financially you will stand to gain substantially. However, you may get into disputes with your partner or those in authority. You are advised to be cautious in both written and spoken word. **Good dates:** 15, 17 and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.

TAURUS (15 May—14 June) You must be very careful while settling accounts this week. You will benefit unexpectedly through the good offices of friends and relatives. The time is particularly favourable for business expansion. Do not hesitate to take bold decisions. However, your health will cause anxiety and you may incur medical expense as a result. Do not keep work pending. **Good dates:** 16, 18 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.

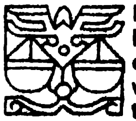
GEMINI (15 June—14 July) A person in authority may prove helpful to you. You may be required to flatter someone for your own benefit. The time is particularly favourable for young people and technicians. You may have to seek government aid if you are an entrepreneur. Progress is signified on your professional front. However, financial gains will only be moderate this week. Do not lose your temper. **Good dates:** 15, 20 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week brings with it ample opportunities for business expansion; do not fritter these away. The time is particularly favourable for competing against others. Your domestic front will be peaceful and the source of inspiration and happiness. Love affairs are well signified. Letters will bring good things. If you fall ill, do not hesitate to seek and act upon expert medical advice. **Good dates:** 16, 19 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable Direction:** East.

LEO (15 August—14 September) Relatives will contribute to your happiness this week. You will enjoy their company. However, you might find yourself under mental strain. Friends may betray you. On your professional front, problems will be solved without much effort. The time is particularly favourable for marraige negotiations and love affairs. You are advised not to take risks. **Good dates:** 17, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.

VIRGO (15 September—14 October) You may find yourself in the midst of family problems this week. However, the time is favourable for those who are seeking employment. You will benefit through the good offices of strangers. A secret matter, very close to your heart, will make steady progress. Do not involve yourself in illegal monetary transactions despite temptations. **Good dates:** 16 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North-west.

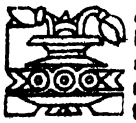


LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Success will not come your way easily this week. You will waste more time on unofficial work. You might suffer irreparable damage because of your lawyer. Your salary might increase. You may also have to shoulder responsibilities. The time is particularly favourable for attempting new ventures and making amends for the past. Do not be irrational. **Good dates:** 18, 19 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.

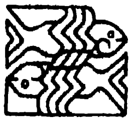
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) If you do not take proper care of your health this week, you are in for a total physical breakdown. The time is favourable for intellectuals and those connected with the arts. You will enjoy the company of a special person. Your friends and acquaintances will cause anxiety to you. Matters related to property and insurance will be easily solved. Do not take risks. **Good dates:** 17, 19 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.

SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Love affairs might upset you this week. The behaviour of children will also cause anxiety. Financially you may not be too happy. Young men with technical qualifications will be presented with new employment opportunities. The time is particularly favourable for intellectual and creative pursuits. You are advised to stay clear of disputes and controversies. **Good dates:** 15, 16 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North-west.

CAPRICORN (15 January—14 March) You will be plagued with quite unnecessary worries this week. A particular incident at home might also cause anxiety. Your enemies will lunch fresh conspiracies against you. Love and matrimonial affairs will make steady progress. Your subordinates may not be very cooperative. You are advised to study situations and developments very carefully. **Good dates:** 15, 16 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 3 and 6. **Favourable direction:** South.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) The health of your spouse or a family member may cause anxiety to you this week. The success of children close to you will make you both proud and happy. A sticky and pending problem may continue to embarrass you. Letters from distant friends and relatives will bring good tidings. You are advised not to neglect your work which demands close attention. **Good dates:** 16, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) You will gain financially this week. A journey may prove helpful to you. The behaviour and attitude of one of your family members will cause anxiety to you. However, progress on your professional front is signified. Those born around midday will gain substantially through speculation. Others are advised against taking unnecessary risks this week. **Good dates:** 17, 19 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-east.

Political forecast for 1981: The super powers will try to increase their spheres of influence in West Asia. As a result their will be political uncertainty. Israel and the Jewish people will be troubled due to uncertain conditions. There will be political uneasiness in Egypt and President Sadat might have to face a coup. The cordial relations between Egypt and Israel will continue. There might be trouble between Libya and Syria. As long as Ayatollah Khomeini holds the reins of power in Iran, the war between Iraq and Iran will continue. However, Khomeini might have to step down before 1982. There might be earthquakes in Iran and Turkey. AMRITLAL

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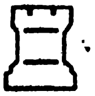
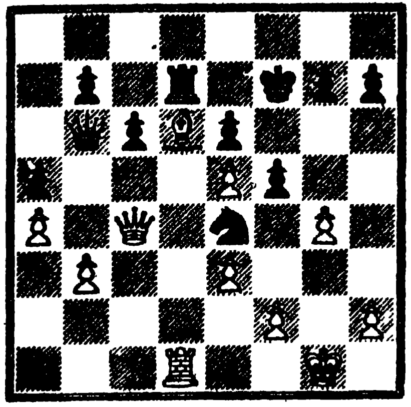
VARIETY

chess



Kuzmin (Black) to move



Velikov (White)

Position after White's 25th move

Game of the month

A bishop is stronger than a knight, but queen and knight are better than queen and bishop. So much for the arithmetic of chess. The apparent anomaly occurs because, although in most positions a bishop really is more useful than a knight, it just happens that queen and knight co-operate so well together. All of which leads to a strategy well worth trying from time to time, particularly with Black. The idea is to give up the 'advantage' of the two bishops in the opening and then by carefully planned exchanges try to simplify to a queen and knight versus queen and bishop situation. I give an example in which this idea works to perfection, mainly because nobody told the player of the white pieces what the player of the black pieces was trying to do.

White: Velikov (Bulgaria). Black: Kuzmin (USSR)

Nimzo-Indian Defence. Jugoslavia 1980.

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—K3; 3. N—QB3, B—N5; 4. Q—B2, N—B3; 5. N—B3, P—Q4; an old and almost forgotten move. More usual is 5. . . P—Q3 intending a later . . . P—K4.

6. P—QR3, B x N+ 7. Q x B, N—K5; 8. Q—B2, O—O; 9. P—K3, P—QR4; 10. B—Q3, P—B4; Black is now playing a Dutch Defence where he has gained some time but given up his valuable KB.

11. P—QN3, B—Q2; 12. B—N2, Q—K1; 13. N—K5? Playing into Black's hands. He should avoid exchanging these knights.

13. . . N x N; 14. P x N, B—B3; 15. O—O. Not perceiving the danger. He could eat humble pie and play for a draw with 15. B x N.

15. . . P x P; 16. B x P, 16. P x P, N—B4 is equally unpleasant.

16. . . B—N4! The key move. Black trades bishops to bring about his desired Q+N versus Q+B set-up.

17. B x B, Q x B; 18. P—QR4, Or 18. Q x P, QR—B1; 19. Q—K7, R—KB2; 20. Q—R4, Q x P and Black is well in command.

18. . . Q—N3; 19. B—R3, KR—Q1; 20. KR—Q1, P—B3; 21. QR—B1. A waste of time. Better 21. B—Q6 although he evidently did not like the look of the reply 21. . . P—B4 forcing the bishop to move again.

21. . . R x R+ 22. R x R, R—Q1; 23. B—Q6, R—Q2; 24. Q—B4, K—B2; Black's advantage is clear. The BQ6 is merely a target liable to be surrounded and Black's knight is much more flexible. White's next move compounds his problems.

25. P—KN4?

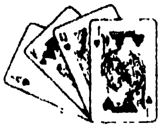
DIAGRAM

25. . . . Q—Q1!! 26. Q—Q4 or 26. P x P, Q—N4+ 27. K—B1, Q x BP and White cannot defend KB2 viz. 28. Q—B2, N—N6+ and 29. . . Q x Q, or 28. Q—K2, N—B6.

26 . . . Q—R6; 27. P x P, Q x BP+ 28. K—R1, Q—B6+ 29. K—N1, Q—N5+ 30. K—B1, Not 30. K—R1, N—B7 mate. **30. . . Q x P+ 31. K—K2, Q—N5+ 32. K—K1, Q—N8+ 33. K—K2, Q x RP+ and White resigned** in view of 34. K—B3, Q—N6+ 35. K x N, Q—N5+ 36. K—Q3, Q x R+.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



This deal from the Club Mediterranean festival of bridge in Guadeloupe led to the kind of 'hassle' that has become so familiar in the upper, and even middle, reaches of tournament play.

Dealer, West. N-S vulnerable

North:
♠ Q J 10
♥ Q 6 5
♦ 8 7
♣ A Q 9 8 4

West:
♠ 9 6
♥ J 9 8 4
♦ Q J 10 5 4 3
♣ 10

East:
♠ K 8
♥ A
♦ A K 9 6
♣ J 7 6 5 3 2

South:
♠ A 7 5 4 3 2
♥ K 10 7 3 2
♦ 2
♣ K

This was the bidding, with Eddie Kantar South and Bobby Goldman North:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	3♦	No	5♦(1)
No(2)	No	dble(3)	No
5♠	No	No	No

(1) Players are supposed to say 'skip bid' whenever a jump bid of this sort is made. The next player is then obliged to pause awhile before calling. East omitted to give the warning.

(2) Difficult, you will agree; South had to think before passing.

(3) Not unreasonable in a pairs tournament, where you have to fight for small gains.

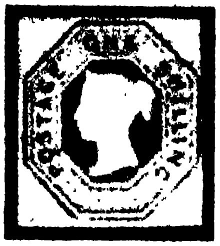
When the dummy went down, the opponents lodged a protest on the grounds that North had reopened after South had made a 'slow pass . In such circumstances the hand is nevertheless played out. On the lead of ♣ 10 South won in dummy, picked up the trumps, crossed to dummy with a third trump, and discarded ♦ 2 on ♣ Q. A low heart brought forth the lone Ace, and Kantar made his contract for the loss of two hearts.

The appeals committee ruled that North did not take a '70 per cent action', in the sense that it could not be said with assurance that 70 per cent of all experts would have doubled Five Diamonds. The result was adjusted to Five Diamonds undoubled, down one. (It looks to be two down on reasonable defence.)

On the test applied, I think this was a fair ruling, except for one thing – East's failure to 'alert'. The object of this procedure is to give an opponent time to consider his action without giving anything away. It seems to me that, since he failed to alert, East forfeited his right to claim a foul.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



Although registration for letters at a fee of one shilling was introduced in 1841, the service was so little used that the Post Office did not issue the appropriate 1s stamps until 1847. They were embossed one at a time in sheets of 20, so that the spaces between them were irregular and sometimes the impressions even overlapped. As a result, stamps with clear margins are very scarce, especially in mint condition. Another reason for the scarcity of the stamps is that six months after their issue the Post Office reduced the registration fee to 6d. Although they could be used on letters to the United States and some remote British colonies, many of the 1s stamps remained unsold and were destroyed. This example, in fine mint condition, realised £1,650 recently at Sotheby's.

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. Who was the creator of *In the Fields, The Loom* and *The Potato Eaters*?
2. He won the Nobel prize for literature in 1947. *Prometheus Misbound, The Coiners* and *The Pastoral Symphony* are among his works. What is his name?
3. What is foam glass?
4. What is the early Archaic period in history?
5. Where would you find the Gulf of Chihli?

ANSWERS

1. Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), the greatest Dutch painter after Rembrandt.
2. Andre Gide, born on 22 November 1869, a controversial figure all his life and one of the most notable writers of his time.
3. Also known as synthetic lava, it is made in moulds from a mixture of ground glass and carbon. It is heated to form a mass of thin-walled bubbles that can be easily sawed and it is used as an insulator.
4. The early Archaic period refers to the period from the disintegration (c. 1200 BC) of the Bronze Age civilisation in Greece to the beginning of the literary and cultural revival of the Archaic period proper (c 750-500 BC).
5. In China. The gulf is noteworthy because it recieves the water of the Yellow River, which has the largest sediment discharge in the world.

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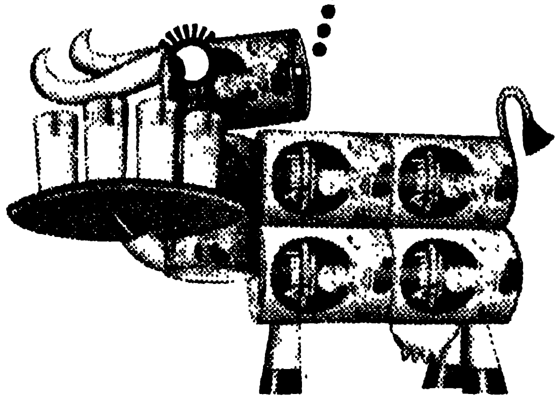

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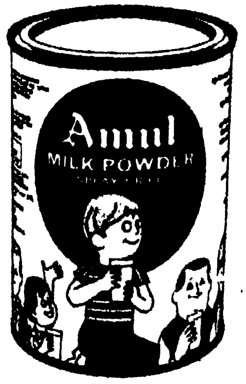

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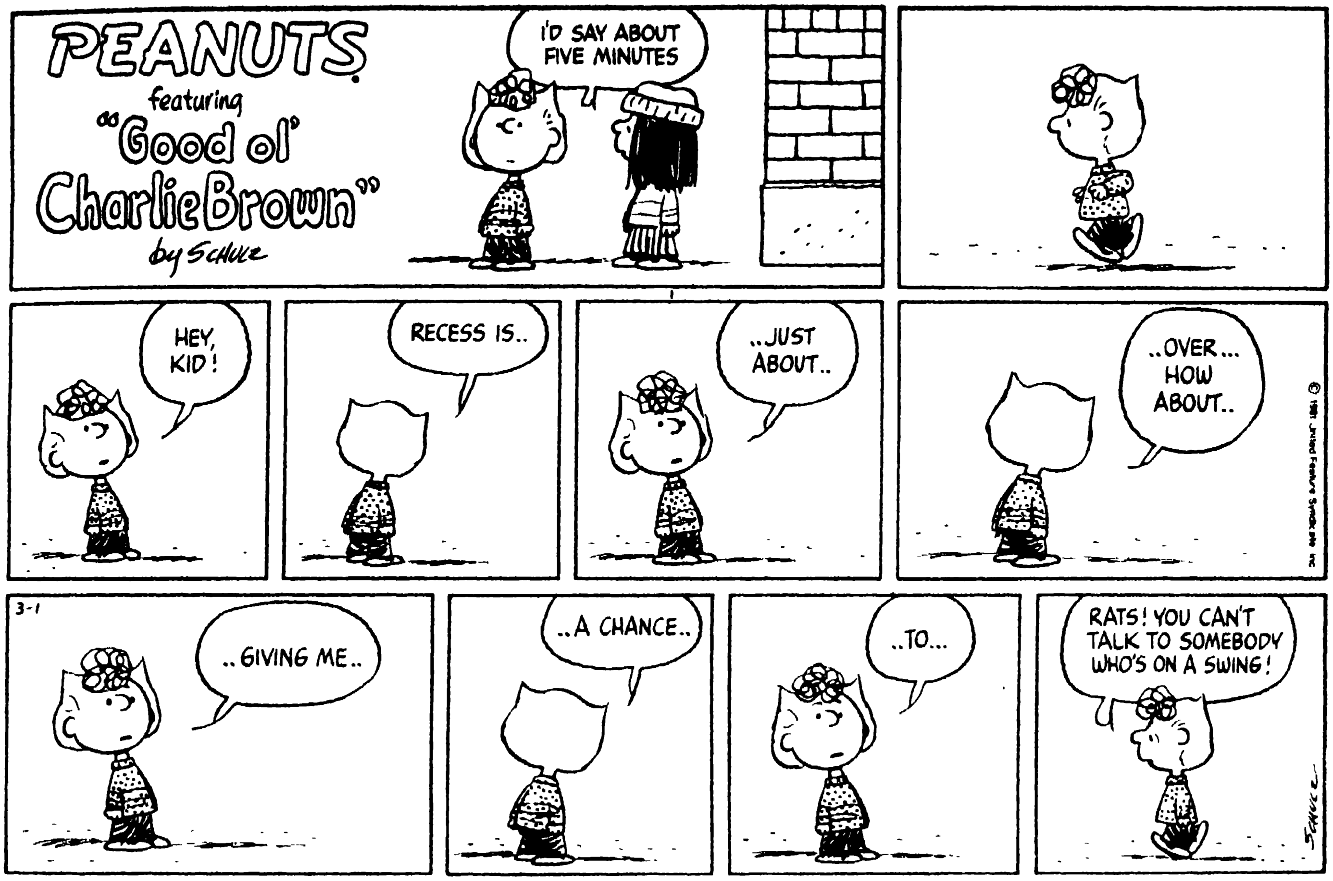

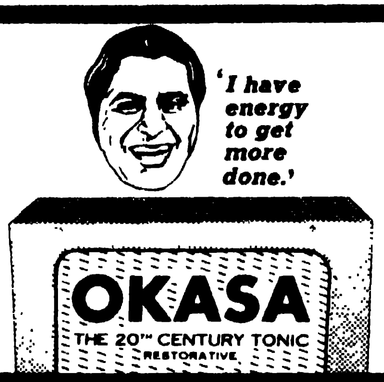

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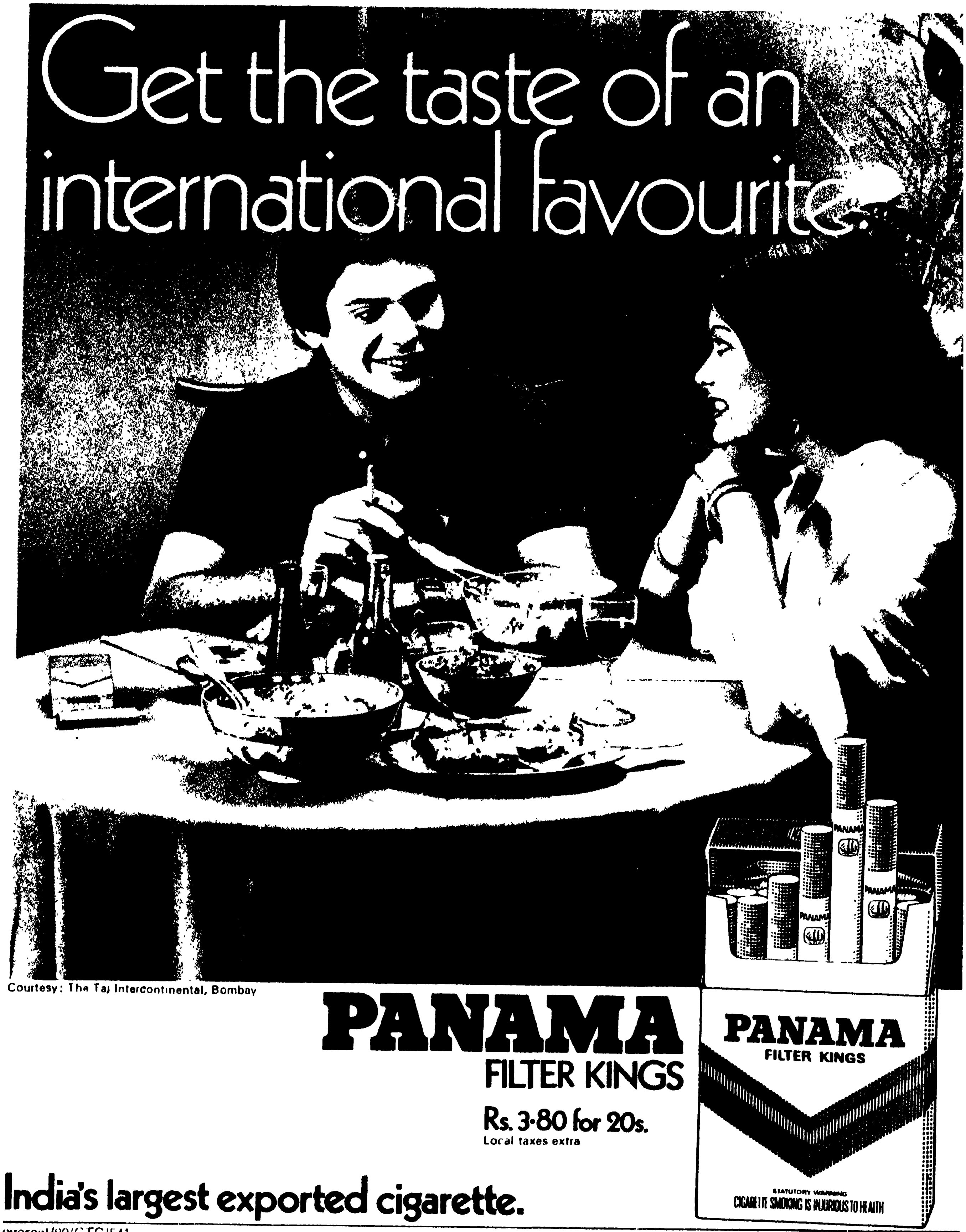
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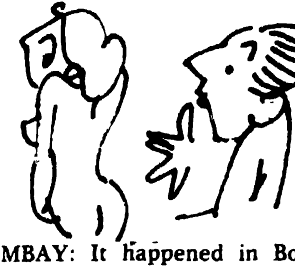


BOMBAY: It happened in Borivli. A couple finding no privacy at home had gone for a film show. During intermission, the woman asked another woman, sitting nearby to accompany her to the loo. When both of them didn't return for half an hour the husband went to investigate. What he found was a sight. His wife was almost in the nude. All her ornaments and clothing had been taken away. Only then did it dawn on him that the 'woman' who accompanied his wife was in disguise. The husband borrowed a saree from an old friend of his near the theatre—*Current* (Ghanshyam Gupta, Delhi)

For every two days a Government of India employee works, he can afford to take a day off. According to a notification of holidays of the Government of India for 1981, 20 holidays and 19 optional holidays have been announced; in addition 52 Sundays and 12 Saturdays; 30 days privilege leave, 20 days casual leave and sick leave: 153 holidays in 365 days—*Blitz* (Usha Gupta, Delhi)

HYDERABAD: There is a never ending debate on whether numerology is a science or superstition, but chief minister Anjaiah is least bothered by such doubt. He seems to have implicit faith in the power of numbers. Speaking to newsmen a few minutes before the swearing-in function, he said that the added up number of his new ministry will be his lucky 'nine' whether it has a strength of 36 (three plus six is nine) or 45 (four plus five). No newsman commented on this personal disclosure of the chief minister, but they were amazed when Mr Anjaiah added in all earnestness: "I may have avoided pruning my 61-member ministry if I had taken two more to make it 63 and complete the nine that rules me. Sixty-one which totals to number seven has perhaps been my undoing"—*Indian Express* (B. N. Pai, Bangalore)

MACHILIPATNAM: A woman and her two daughters found themselves in the same predicament as Surpanaka but with a difference. If Laxmana cut off Surpanaka's nose and ears for making overtures first at Rama and then at himself some miscreants allegedly suspecting that the woman's son had eloped with a girl meted out the harsh treatment to the women and a youth in the neighbourhood. Last night the miscreants abducted the victims from their house here in a car took them to the outskirts of the town, cut off their nose and ears and abandoned them behind the Hindu College here. The elder daughter managed to reach the Government Hospital and then sent rickshaws to pick the rest of the victims. This was stated in a complaint lodged with the police by the victims—*Indian Express* (G. Ratna Kumari, Machilipatnam)

NEW DELHI: Now a days, if you buy a packet of *jeera* at the Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan in Connaught Place, the *jeera* jeers at you from within the cellophane bag with the label that its date of packing is 13 October, 1981! The flummoxed customer is at a loss to decipher how he is buying a product which is packed eight months ahead—*Hindusthan Times* (S. V. Prasad, New Delhi)

SHIMOGA: A person who died about two years ago is among nearly 100 persons against whom Shimoga police have initiated action under section 107 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Under the provisions of the code which enables the police to take preventive measures to check any breach of peace the police have named 50 persons belonging to one group and the rest belonging to the other to appear before the sub-divisional magistrate. Mr B. H. Shankaramurthi, secretary, state unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party and one of the persons named by the police in the proceedings said even those who had left Shimoga long back had been included in the list. Mr Shankaramurthi alleged that some of the names had been included because of "political pressure." Mr B. N. Nagraj, superintendent of police, Shimoga, said the name of the dead person had crept in inadvertently and the police had rectified the mistake and prepared a revised list—*Hindu* (M. A. Sampath Kumar, Bangalore)

COIMBATORE: A young woman with short cut hair clad in men's wear, who was found selling illicit distilled arrack in her house at Aranmanaipudur, near Tirupur, was arrested. The arrest was made during a massive prohibition raid conducted in and around Tirupur. Police could identify her as a woman only from the voice as she was dressed like a 'man' clad in a *dhoti* and shirt with a towel on her shoulder. It is learnt that the arrested woman Jaya (21) used to don only men's wear even from childhood and would help her mother Subbathal, procure illicitly distilled arrack and sell it. In all this the guise of a man was a help to her—*Hindu* (Pradip Kumar Datta, Birati)

without comment

Prices are stable only on the day when the bazars are closed—J. C. Shah, former Chief Justice of India

These days he (the President) throws light sometimes only when he goes out of the Rashtrapati Bhavan—Jagjivan Ram

To you the toiling workers are *goondas*. To us, they are our comrades. This is the difference in our approach—E. K. Nayanar, the chief minister of Kerala, to the opposition parties

It is only God in the form of a bumper harvest who has done anything for the common man—Piloo Mody

(Journalists are) snakes, scorpions, poison and enemies of people—A. R. Antulay, the chief minister of Maharashtra at a function in Nasik

The general budget and the railway budget have forged a united front to increase inflation and assault the comman man—Madhu Dandavate

The awakening that is taking place in India is going to take forms which cannot be managed by 20-point programmes or by a dynastic succession of one pilot for another—David Selbourne in *India Today*

Is the Hanuman Road (in Delhi) a misspelt version of the world-renowned Hahneman, the founder of homeopathy?—Dr Veronica Carstens, wife of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany

I have practically no audience; even the elite get bored with my films, not to talk of the masses. So I make it for myself—Director Mani Kaul

To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace—Pope John Paul II

If kings, queens and hereditary titles did not exist, few serious people would have the imagination or gall to propose their creation—Editorial in *New Stateman*

I envy India in one respect. Whatever form of democracy is practised there, it has been going on for the last so many years—General Zia-ul Haq

Sex is a very natural phenomenon. All those prudes who propagate that a woman should have sex for the first time on her *suhaag raat* talk bullshit—Actress Rekha quoted in *Current*

stration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

SCRIBES ON DOLE

THE two rival unions of journalists—Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ) and National Union of Journalists (NUJ)—seem to have no qualms about taking money from the UP government. In the past few months the UP government has given altogether Rs 1.25 lakhs as grants to the state units of these organisations for their respective conferences. The NUJ was the first to seek the government's help. It told the state information minister, Mr Ammar Rizvi, that as the Kerala government had given Rs one lakh to the IFWJ for its national conference held recently at Cochin, the UP government too should dish out some money for the NUJ's national meet at Agra. The state government doled out Rs 50,000. Not to be outdone, the UP unit of the IFWJ also approached the minister for assistance before its state conference at Faizabad. This time Mr Ammar Rizvi was even more generous. He gave Rs 75,000. Besides, at the Faizabad meet, the state government hosted a dinner, Mr Ammar Rizvi hosted a lunch and two deputy ministers of the V. P. Singh team, Sita Ram Nisad and Nirmal Khatri, hosted a meal each—all at government expense. While the conference was on, all rooms in the circuit house and the tourist bungalow in Faizabad were booked by the state information department.

RULE, WOMEN!

THE entire subcontinent could soon be ruled by women. Mrs Indira Gandhi, of course, is the Prime Minister here. Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike is waiting in the wings in Sri Lanka. Begum Nusrat and daughter Benazir Bhutto are making life miserable for President Zia of Pakistan. And now Sheikh Mujib's daughter, Haseena Wajed, will end her exile in Delhi to take up the active presidentship of the Bangladesh Awami League, a post to which she has already been elected. She can be expected to launch a crusade against President Zia of Bangladesh. All these women are potential Presidents and Prime Ministers. Interestingly, they are all closely related to charismatic leaders who ruled their countries in the past: Jawaharlal Nehru, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto.

Indira Gandhi

Sirimavo Bandaranaike

Begum Nusrat Bhutto

COME INTO OUR PARLOUR

1981 not being a leap year, former Prime Minister Morarji Desai's birthday was celebrated on 28 February (he was born on 29 February 1896) with a *yagna* at New Delhi's Laxmi Narain *mandir* (popularly known as the Birla temple) by the "Morarji Desai Janamdivas Abhinandan Samity." What was most interesting was the composition of this "samiti." The entire leadership of the Delhi unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the RSS—Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Madan Lal Khurana, R. K. Gupta, P. K. Chandla and, of course, the new convert, Sikander Bakht—figured in it. Was this a not-too-subtle invitation to Mr Desai to come aboard the RSS-BJP ship, particularly when the Janata party seems to have virtually passed a no-confidence motion against the former PM?

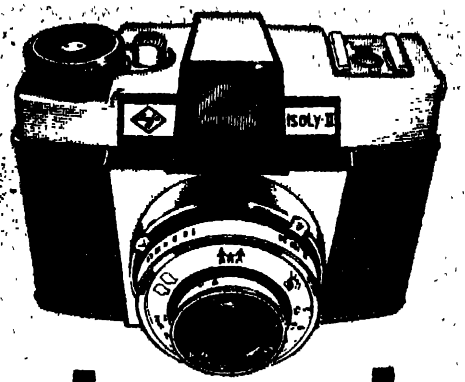
NO THOROUGHFARE

A stretch of National Highway No. 25, which goes from Kanpur via Kalpi towards Bombay, has become a bone of contention between civilian and defence authorities in Kanpur, a city with a high concentration of defence establishments. The particular stretch which passes three defence units at Kalpi is closed to heavy vehicular traffic for most of the day, as demanded by the 18,000 defence workers after several road accidents. The road is the main link between Kanpur and the Indian Oil's complex at Panki, where the oil pipeline from Haldia and Barauni (the HBK pipeline) terminates and which is the apex distribution centre for petroleum products in the area. Tankers from all over the state pass through Kanpur city to reach the Panki complex. Due to the closure of the streth of the road near Armapore, the tankers have to take a detour via a narrow road to Kalyanpur to reach the city. The defence authorities are helpless because the workers' unions will not yield to the state government's demand for opening the road Moreover, an alternate route, via Dadanagar, which has been under construction for the past few years, has not been completed by the state PWD despite repeated pleas by the district magistrate, Mr Ram Krishna. The DM of Kanpur is now in a dilemma—if he yields to the tanker owners' demand and opens the road, there could be disruption in defence production. If he maintains the status quo, as he is doing at present, he is threatened by a tanker owners' strike which will disrupt diesel, koresene and petrol supplies to a large part of the state. All due to the apathy of the state PWD.

CENSORING HISTORY

ON the eve of the seventh non-aligned summit in New Delhi, the films division produced a documentary on the 20 years of the movement. The film included many rare shots of the 1947 Afro-Asian summit in New Delhi, the Bandung conference, non-aligned summits at Belgrade, Cairo, Lusaka, Colombo, Algiers and Havana. The leaders of the Indian delegations featured in the shots of all the conferences, except the one held at Havana. Not that any tears need be shed for the then foreign minister, Mr Shyam Nandan Mishra, whose performance was rather poor. But should the films division censor history?

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN



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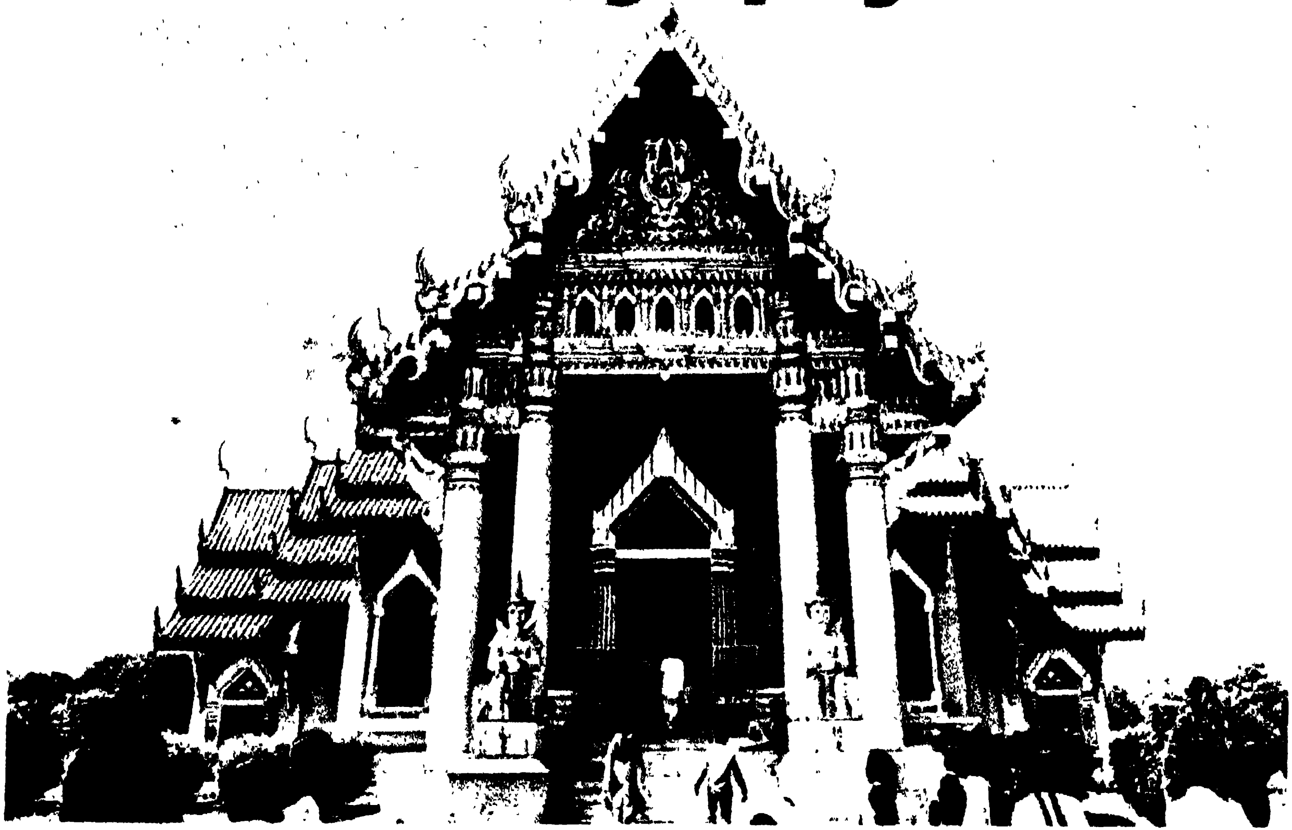

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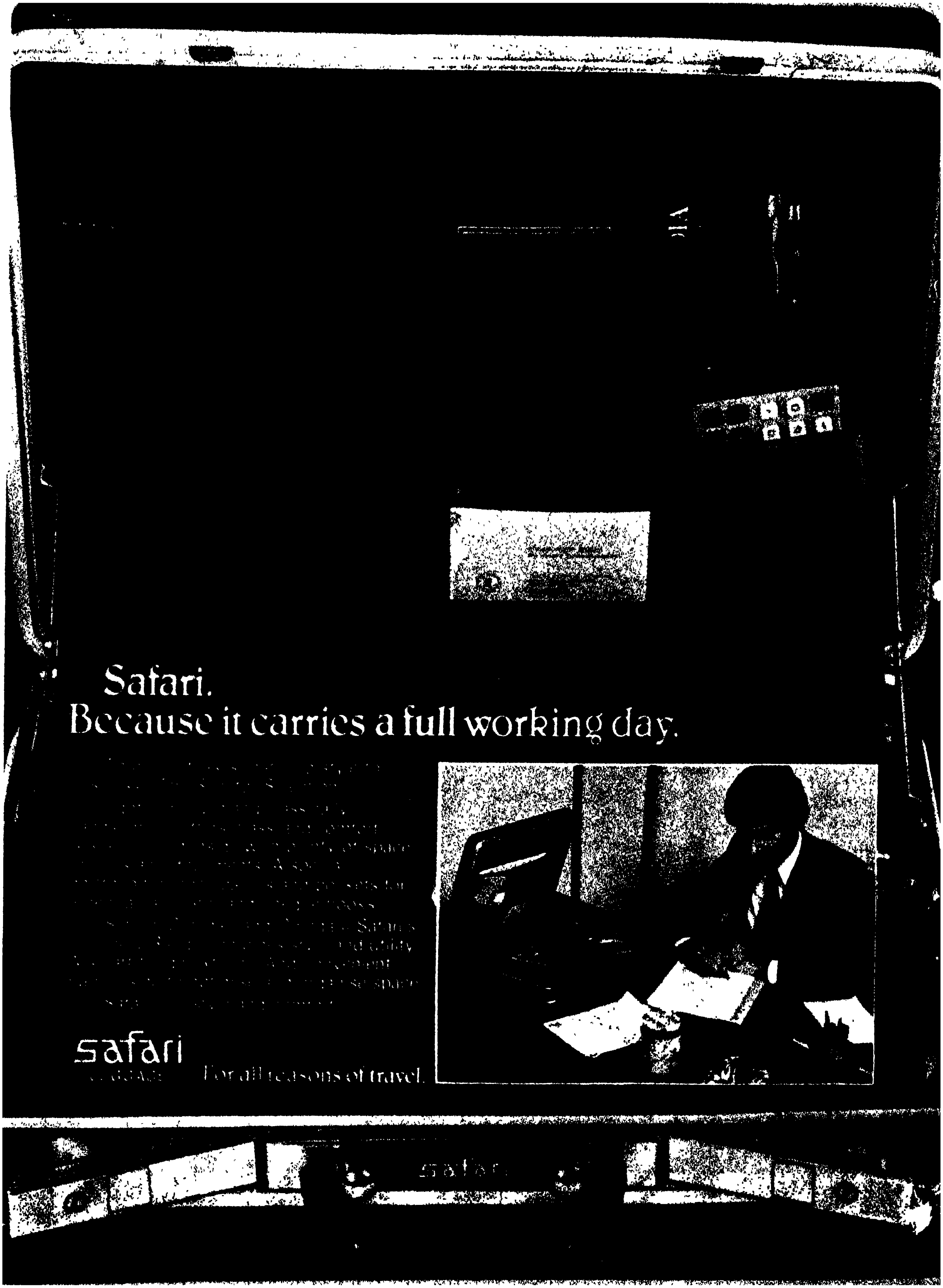
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Pan Singh Tomar, who once represented India in the Asian Games

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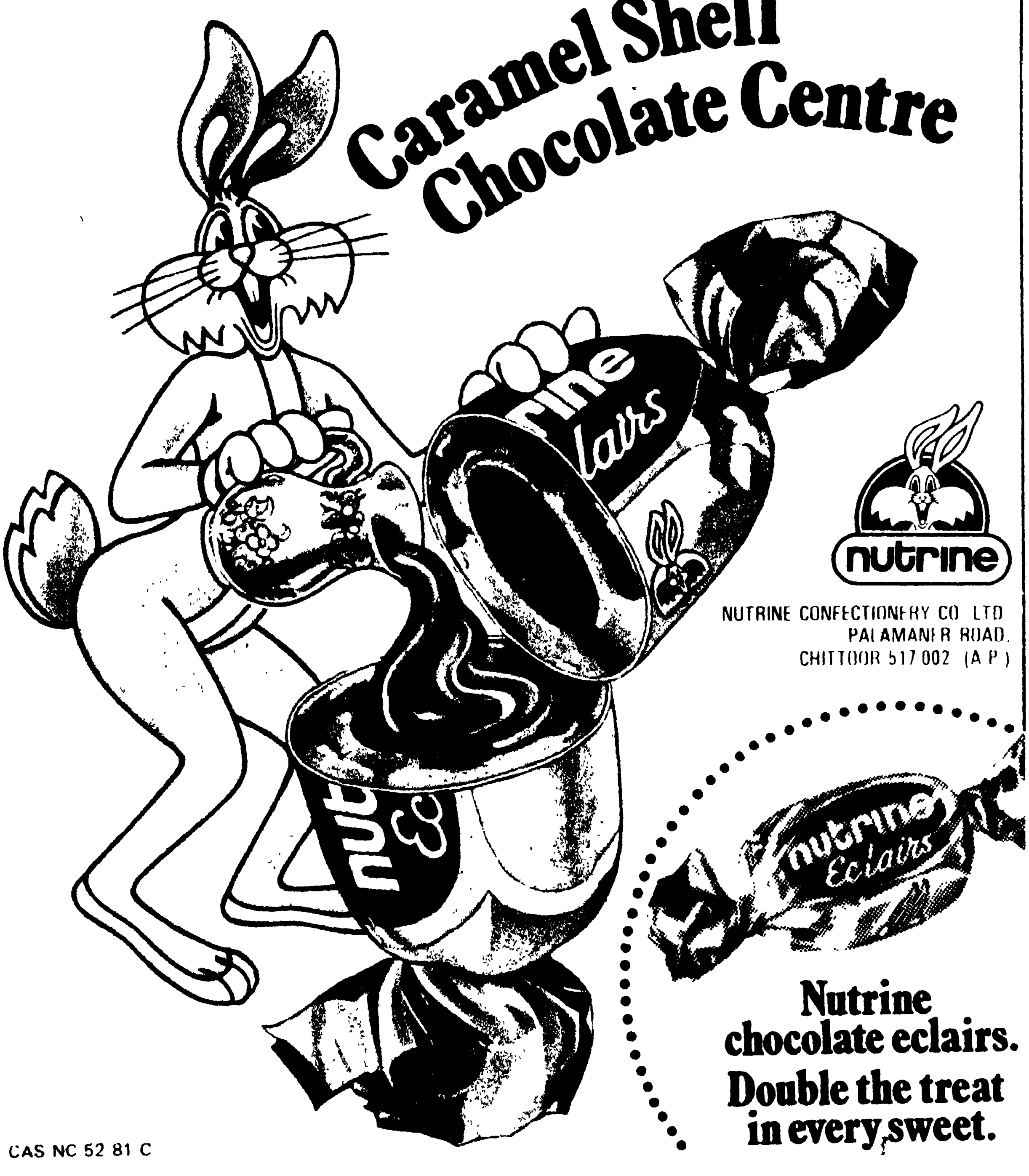

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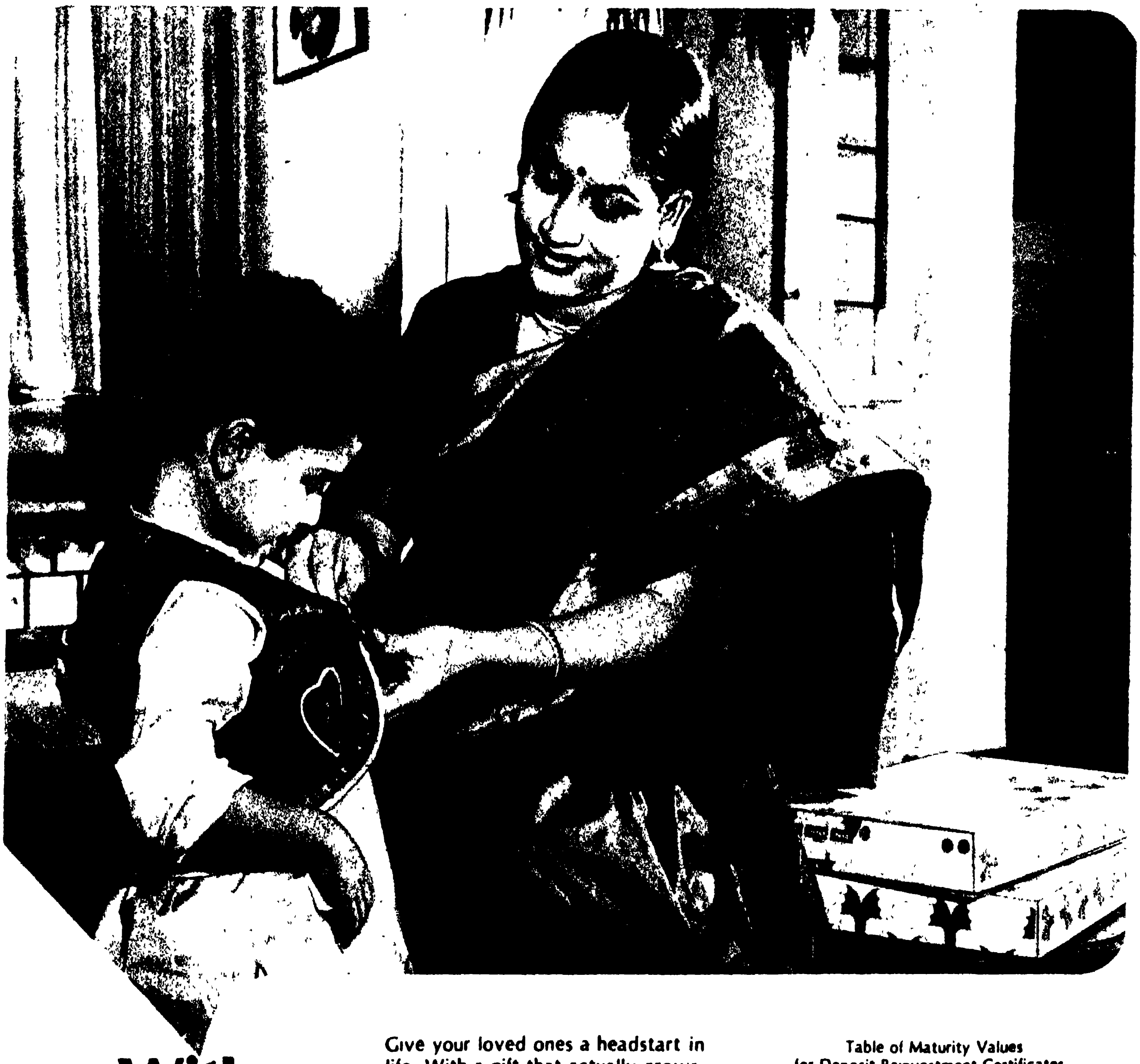

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SUNDAY VOLUME 8
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March 15, 1981

HARISH KAPOOR

In the ravines of Chambal and the desolate areas of UP, dacoits still rule the roost, spreading terror and paradoxically, becoming legends to the poor who see them as success stories rather than brigands. Our correspondents went into these remote areas on the trail of the big three. Malkhan Singh, Phoolan Devi and Pan Singh Tomar. A detailed story of how they are challenging the forces of law. **Page 12**

The threat of a nuclear holocaust hangs over New York: If the Israelis do not surrender occupied Arab territories within 36 hours, then the city will be destroyed by a thermonuclear blast. This deadly ultimatum, served by Colonel Kadhafi of Libya, forms the central theme of the exciting, new work of political fiction, *The Fifth Horseman*, by the famous duo Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre. We publish this week the first of two exclusive extracts. **Page 36**

Beethoven, the great composer, was a "man's man," a confirmed homosexual, and not the romantic bachelor his countless admirers thought him to be. Kishore Chatterjee re-examines the maestro's personality in the light of recent research. **Page 50**

The racism of the British members of *Gandhi's* unit has threatened to bring the shooting of the film to a standstill. The Indians have nicknamed Indo-British Films the new East India Company. **Page 42**

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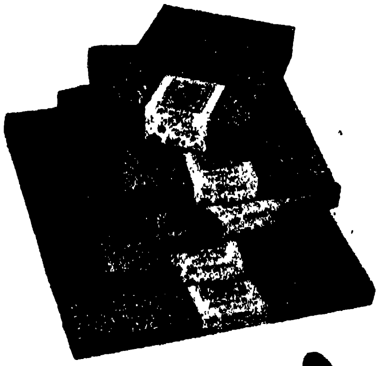

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The Government

"Burning Train" burnt trains

It now turns out that the government, or the railways (which is a government department) partially subsidised' the multi-starrer, big budget film called *The Burning Train,* which was released and which promptly flopped last year. The filmmakers took the help of the railways to shoot some of their scenes and they lived up to their name: three railway coaches were damaged during the shooting of the film. The railways say that no new coaches were made available to the filmmakers, and that only old coaches from workshops were loaned to the producer.

The details of the damage: Coach number 6133 had its inside panels charred and burnt. One compartment of coach number 6148 was burnt; and the electrical wiring and discoloured panels needed to be replaced. Signs of fire were visible along the entire length of one side of coach number 2804A. The inside panels, insulation between panels and the tops of three windows were damaged, as were pillars and beams.

President has not passed West Bengal bills

Legislation passed by the Vidhan Sabhas is sometimes kept waiting, by the centre, 12 years for the President's assent! This is another manifestation of the power that the central government enjoys over the state. The state suffers even more if it is ruled by a party other than the ruling party at the centre. This has been the experience of the CPI(M)-dominated Left Front in West Bengal. As many as five bills passed by the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha sent up by the state government for presidential assent are pending in New Delhi.

The West Bengal Restoration of Alienated Land (Amendment) Bill, 1980, received by Delhi on 30 September 1980 is held up because the ministry of rural reconstruction has asked for some clarifications. The clarifications were received on 25 February, and now the matter is "being considered further."

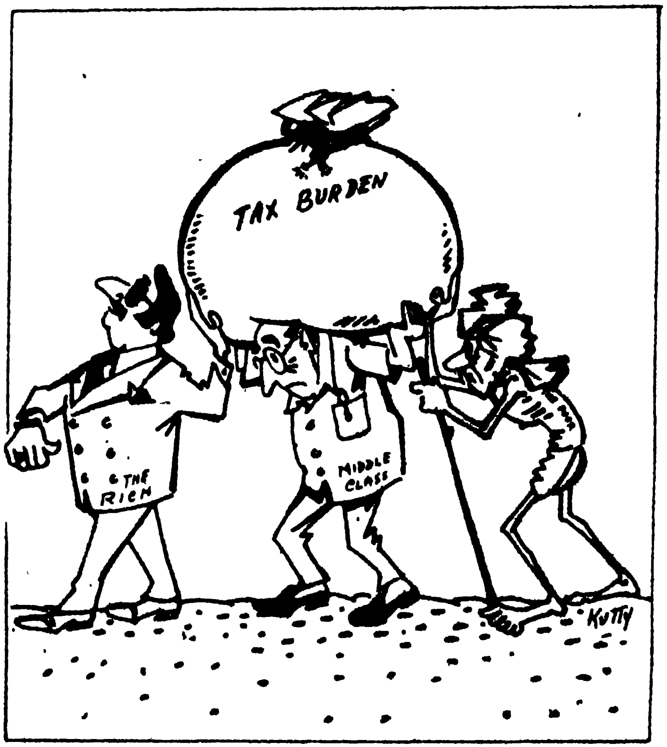
The Industrial Disputes (West Bengal Second Amendment) Bill, 1980, is held up for the same reasons, as are two other bills. But the longest delay has been with the Trade Union (West Bengal Amendment) Bill, 1969—we repeat, 1969. Leftists may come to power, but they have to hang around a long while even to make marginal dents in the system.

An artificial sugar scarcity

Last year there was a genuine sugar scarcity in the country but this year's scarcity is largely the result of the government's inept handling of the allocation and distribution of the commodity. The government's declared policy is to encourage new and expanding sugar factories by allocating to them extra free sale sugar from the sales proceeds of which they can partly finance their expansion plans. But in the last three months the government has allocated about 70,000 tonnes of levy sugar to the new and expanding units, most of which are in the cooperative sector. This has resulted in a shortage of sugar available for release through the public distribution system. In several parts of the country people get their sugar from ration shops every fortnight instead of every week. To make amends for this the government has banned the export of sugar. But the STC is already committed to reexport to a London firm 180,000 tonnes of sugar that it had imported last year. This sugar will have to come from somewhere, be it from the free sale or the levy stocks. Fortunately, for the time being at least, the STC will not export the 50,000 tonnes of levy sugar that it was alloted because of the export ban. Another reason for pockets of sugar scarcity in the country is the reported unavailability of railway wagons to ship sugar from factories to consuming centres. Due to the piecemeal allocation of wagons, about 200,000 tonnes of sugar is lying with the factories when they should have been with the fair price shops for distribution to the public.

Commerce vs industry

Yet another proposal of the commerce ministry to bring down production costs and raise exports is being thwarted by the directorate-general of technical development (DGTD) of the industries ministry. The commerce ministry wants exporters to be allowed to import second-hand machinery under open general licence (OGL). This will require an amendment of the import policy for 1980-81. Currently the import of second-hand machinery is allowed only on merit after a competent chartered engineer abroad has certified the remaining life and utility of the machinery. The commerce ministry argues that misuse of the proposed facility, feared by the industries ministry, can be prevented by introducing new deterrents. The import of second-hand machinery at cheaper prices will reduce production costs and save valuable foreign exchange. The proposal, if implemented, will be able to take quick advantage of the current move by Japan to get out of textile exports as a result of which a lot of textile machinery there has become available at bargain prices. But the inter-ministerial wrangle is standing in the way.



SUNDAY

The Tantrik Quest

By Samaresh Bose, winner, Sahitya Akademi award for 1980

Tantra and Freud

If Samaresh Bose's *The tantrik quest* (25 January-1 February) is analysed from the Freudian point of view, several *tantrik* practices would no longer appear to be gimmicks or a mystery. Both *kundalini* and *swayambhulinga* represent what is said to be "sexuality" in the Freudian conception, with all its vicissitudes. Both are asleep, meaning that both are the functions of the unconscious mind. Whatever is understood by arousal of sex through biological performance, it is quite different from what takes place in the unconscious. Although Otto Fenichel, through psychoanalytic processes, established a psycho-biological correlate that male sexuality means "a desire to fill in the tube by entire penetration of penis upto the root (active)"; and female sexuality is the reverse desire "to be filling up the tube in entirety (passive)." He further posited that this desire has a physiological correlate (*suśumna*) lying at the base of the penis/clitoris (the rudimentary penis). So we can infer that if *kundalini*—the source of *mahashakti*—can be aroused by any means, the genital member of the body has to be brought into operation.

Every psycho-biological organism is endowed with bisexual (masculine-feminine ar active-passive) wishes. For example, when one is hearing something, he or she is in a passive (feminine) state, wishing to fill up the tube; and when the same person is delivering a talk, he or she is in the active (masculine) state of filling in the tube. The concept of bisexuality is accepted in Hinduism as *Hara-Parvati* or *ardhanariswar*.

Every child experiences the first touch of the female genital during birth and according to psychoanalyst Nador, the male child is horrified at the largeness of the mother's genital. This has a relation with the male child's sufferance from the Oedipus complex and fear, which is more severe than that of the female child.

Susumna, passing through the four other stations, finally leading to *paramshiva* or *chidananda* (complete satiation), cannot be ordinarily resolved because of bisexual conflict. *Chidananda* can hardly be attained because it is impossible to know during coitus whether the male is desiring the female's pleasure or the reverse.

Thus it appears there is a subtle similarity between the "sex" conceived in the *tantrik* cult and Freudian sexuality. Since Freud was a clinician his major emphasis was on sexuality and mental illness. What is found in *tantrik* practices is overt activation involving the sacrifice of goats, blood, vermilion skulls and wine. These are all awe-inspiring objects; *mantras* are chanted to allay the fear they generate. But what happens if a *tantrik* fails in the process?

A psychoanalyst, Calcutta

Whatever the *tantrik* quest is, history shows it to be a result of foreign invasion. Drawn by the pleasant monastic life in this land, the Aryan invaders forgot their battle cry and took to occultism.

Deepak Pawar, Bombay

The secret *tantrik sadhana*, leading ultimately to spiritual enlightenment, is fantastic and unbelievable. It is only those who have faith in the process who can understand it; non-believers have no right to comment on it.

Joy Kumar Santra, 24 Parganas

Tantra and *kundalini* have become the subject of controversy. Efforts are on to prove and explain *kundalini* scientifically and accurately. The word *tantra* means continuity—the continuity of development along a certain path, the continuity of the life experience. Since this spiritual path is not fun, the quest is either started and completed or not started at all; if one begins and quits, the thought of the unfinished task haunts one for ever. Practising *tantra* and awakening of the *kundalini* are a very specialised method of self-realisation which can only be attained after long and intense practice.

Many people are under the notion that *tantra* is a rather "loose" philosophy that accepts whatever you wish to do, so long as you do it with the "right Œttitude"—and progress twoards spiritual awakening. But if we study *tantra* as it has been traditionally practised, we find that it is a highly evolved science. The *tantrik* tradition has made unparalleled contributions to understanding and mastering the finer forces of nature and attaining the most advanced states of consciousness. Swami Ajaya alias Allan Weinstick, Ph. D., had written in a book named *Kundalini, Evolution and Enlightenment*: "*Tantra* is a very practical science for systematically understanding and mastering the forces of the universe and travelling through the subtlest realms of existence to the very source of consciousness itself."

Nowadays there are many cheap editions of books supposedly on *tantra* and *tantrik* sex. *Tantra* is related with sex, but not sexual passion. Sex is regarded as a source of energy. In his *Neo Tantra* Acharya Rajneesh says: "*Tantra* has been the ony tradition that has accepted sex totally. Don't condemn the mud because the lotus is hidden in the mud; use the mud to produce the lotus. *Tantra* says, if sex is so vital that life comes out of it, then there must be something more to it. That something more is the key towards divinity..."

Probal Sanatani, Kanpur

What Mr Bose wrote is only a crude interpretation of *tantra*. He did not mention the real significance of Shiva, shakti, Kali and Kali's garland of skulls; without understanding these one cannot grasp the true meaning of *tantra*. The process of transforming animality or latent divinity into supreme divinity is known as *tantra sadhana*; it involves liberation from bondage. Mr Bose should probe the divine aspect of *tantra*.

S. Anand, Jodhpur

According to the *tantrik* Pranatosh Baba the five activities essential for achieving "total spiritual bliss" are drinking wine, eating meat and fish, money and sex. But it is only the rich who can indulge in these activities, so "total spiritual bliss" can never be attained by the vast majority of ordinary people.

A. H. Khan, Bilaspur

Mr Bose would have done well to omit portions of his narrative that described a so-called *tantrik's* exhibition of something resembling the Indian rope trick with his organ. Apart from the repulsive and nauseating picture, which many will not believe is true, this is hardly *tantra*. About 30 years ago a friend told me about something similar he had seen in a Paris night club.

D. Gossain, Calcutta

The "penis incident" which Mr Bose narrated can be classified under *yoga*. *Tantra* and *yoga* are quite different. The author's contention that without *yoga tantra* is impossible is contradicted by what happens during Kali *puja*. Mr Bose was himself witness to a "Kali *puja* in the *tantrik* tradition" among the Santhals. Were all the Santhal villagers who performed the *puja yogis? Yoga* is meant to keep the body and mind in good health; it is a cure for some diseases (like asthma).

Anand R. Deshpande, Solapur

The author made two mistakes: first, he failed to define properly such terms as *tantrik*, *yogi*, *bhairava*, *hathayogi*, *sanyasi* and *paramhansa;* secondly, he ought to have met other famous *tantriks* too to get an overall idea of the science and how it is practised. I know of two popular centres of *tantrik* worship in Calcutta. Thousands flock to two *tantrik* *sadhus* to get cured of diseases. Among their disciples are former chief justices of the High Court, ministers and police commissioners.

B. N. Mitra, Calcutta

Shia-Sunni fight

S.Kalbe Jawad, president of the Ali Congress, says in his letter *(Opinion,* 25 January) that Shias never abuse other sects and condemn Yazid, who according to Mr Jawad, was the murderer of Hazrat Husain. It is well-known that the accusations of Lucknow's Shias are directed at the first three caliphs of Islam, namely Hazrat Abubakr, Hazrat Umar and Hazrat Usman and Hazrat Aisha, the wife of the Prophet and daughter of the first caliph. The abuses are recited in public, and include vulgarities. This is the main point of dispute between the Shias and Sunnis.

Mr Jawad says that around 1905 a new sect emerged who called themselves Yazidis. There is no such sect and even if there are a few individuals who call themselves Yazidis, they are a microscopic minority. The Sunnis of Lucknow are, as a whole, against *tabarra,* which, in simple language means downright abuse, and involves vulgarities. Sunnis also demand the fundamental right of praising the caliphs.
Athar Husain Qurashi, Lucknow

Any religious controversy resulting in violence and hatred between two fraternal sections of the same community is most unseemly, to put it mildly. Both sections must share the blame for their disgraceful "annual battles." How is it that Lucknow alone carries the stigma of large-scale killing, arson and looting among the two sections—that too confined only to the old city? There are many educated and sensible people in both sections who could sit together and resolve the dispute. But it is the leaders on both sides who have a vested interest in the continuing outbursts of violence. I accept Mr Jawad's contention that "Shias never abuse other sects during and after the Moharram processions." But does this mean Shias do abuse others before the procession and that Sunnis abuse all the time? I do not agree with Mr Jawad's explanation of *tabarra* as "hatred for the enemies of Islam." I believe its meaning is closer to passive dissociation.

Faizabad and Jaunpur in UP and Madras in the south have substantial Muslim populations of both Shias and Sunnis; both sections have been living peacefully together for centuries. In Iran too there are excellent relations between Shias and Sunnis. Can't the people of Lucknow learn a lesson from them? I am reminded of what Iqbal has said in *Jawabe Shikwa: "Eik hi saab ka nabi, Deen bhi, Iman bhi eik; Harme pak bi Allah bhi Koran bhi eik; Kya barhi baat thi hote Mussalman bhi eik?* (All Muslims follow the same Prophet, profess the same faith, bow in the direction of the same Ka'aba, worship the same Allah and recite the same Koran. Cannot all Muslims be one too?)"
Hashmatullah, Lucknow

The government had banned both Shia and Sunni processions because they always caused tension. Despite the ban, on 13 December, the Ali Congress took out the so-called silent procession which was an obvious provocation to the government and the Sunnis. Every action has a reaction. In 1969 and 1974 the Shias launched an attack on Sunnis. They went on the rampage, with killings and arson. Ever since then, Sunnis have harboured a grudge against Shias. Today their anti-Shia feelings are so strong, even their leaders fail to pacify them. The only solution now lies in upholding the ban on Shia and Sunni processions.
Shahabuddin, Lucknow

Modest, graceful

I was surprised by *Wary about the sari (The world,* 25 January). Considering the worldwide appeal of the sari, one can easily conclude that it is preferred for the modesty and grace it endows upon the wearer. The allegation of people that the sari reveals the body's contours and is therefore immodest is absurd. Is not then a trimly-cut *salwar-kameez* revealing enough too? The sari keeps the body wholly covered, from-neck to toe. The little that it leaves incovered can easily be covered by wearing a longer blouse.
Manju Bal. Ranchi

Optimism, for once

Your inaugural *Goodnews* page (25 January) said it loud and clear: not all is gloom. Congratulations for being optimistic.
Jose, Hyderabad

Thank you for the new page. Having got used to reading only bad news, we were beginning to forget that there still are some good things happening.
Subir K. Bhattacharjee, Calcutta

Goodnews is a welcome glimmer of hope
Mankumar Sen, Calcutta

The problem

S P. Sagar's *Why did 18-year-old Lal Bahadur Rai die?* (25 January) about the tragic incident of police firing at Samastipur Jail is a sad reflection on the prison administration. Evidently, the rule of law is being replaced by the law of the jungle. Far from a solution to our law and order problems, the prison has become a problem itself. To quote a Supreme Court pronouncement, "In the eye of law prisoners are persons and not animals...When a prison is traumatized, the Constitution suffers a shock."
Niresh Bagchi, Dibrugarh

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

Changed signs

A curious change has overcome *Sundayweek.* For instance, according to the earlier horoscope the sign Aries was for those with birthdays from 21 March to 20 April. Mr Amritlal, the new fortuneteller, has changed Aries to 15 April to 14 May. Those whose Zodiac sign was Aries have now changed to Pisces.
Y. Mukhtar Basha, Madras

Amritlal is going by the Indian system; earlier we followed the international system.—Editor

The dead Presidents

Reagan becomes sheriff of America (16 November) reminded me that for more than a century now, every American President who has been elected to office in a year divisible by four, has died in harness: Harrison (1840), Lincoln (1860), Garfield (1800), McKinley (1900), Harding (1920), Roosevelt (1940), and Kennedy (1960). Better luck for Reagan (1980), we hope.
D. R., D. Choudhuri, Silchar

Bold hero

This refers to *Gundu Rao weeds out his agriculture minister* (25 January). Indira Gandhi had chosen S. Bangarappa as the president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (I)at the time of the 1979 Karnataka Congress(I) split because only a bold hero of the backwards could stand up against the might of Devaraj Urs. Now Bangarappa is gone; Mrs Gandhi will not tolerate any intelligent person or socialist in her party. She belives in appointing sycophants to important posts.
Perooru Joru, Bangalore

Which distinction?

It remains to be seen whether, by the end of the cricket season, that controversial umpire Mr Rex Whitehead enlists himself for the 'Gallantry Award for 1981' along with you or prefers to remain "Rex Whitehead of the year."
Sudhish Nayar, Kanpur

Wrong name

You seem to have renamed Manju Bhargavi the well-known Telugu actress of *Shankarabharanam* fame Manju B. Hargavi (*Khaas Baat,* 11 January)
M. B. Eswaraiah, Bangalore

Brute force

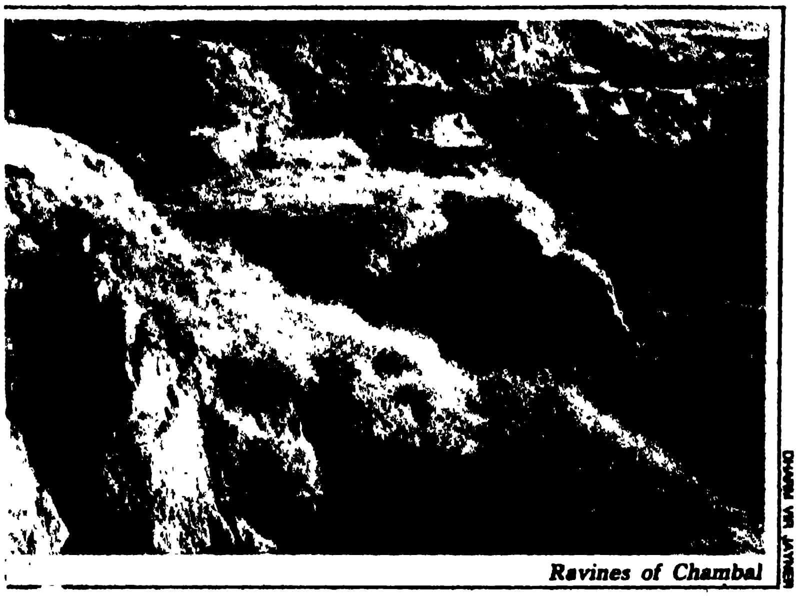
Judging by *The child-baiters of Orissa* (18 January,) Orissa's policemen appear no better than the policemen of Bhagalpur. It is strange that the police entered a school campus without permission and beat up students mercilessly. The government should take drastic action to check police misdeeds.
Pijush Kanti Chandra, Kharagpur

Last letter

In effect, what Mrs Gandhi told the kisans was: "Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday—but never jam today."
C. P. M. Nambeodiry, Varanasi

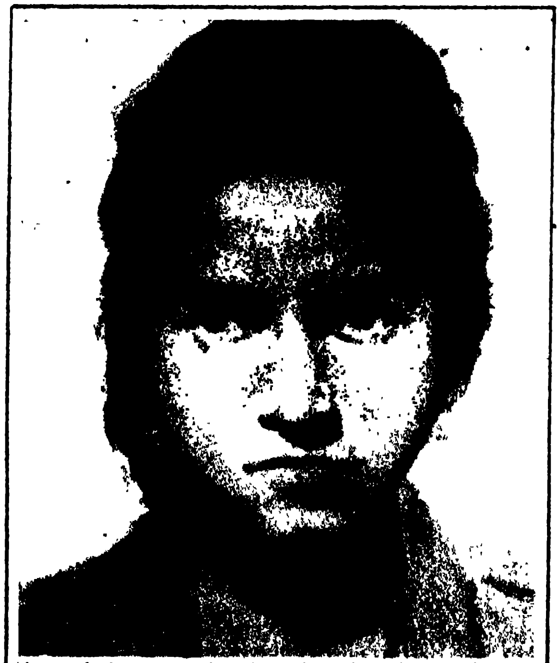
Rs 50 for the last letter

THE THREE MOST DREADED DACOITS IN INDIA



Ravines of Chambal

DHARM VIR JAYNER

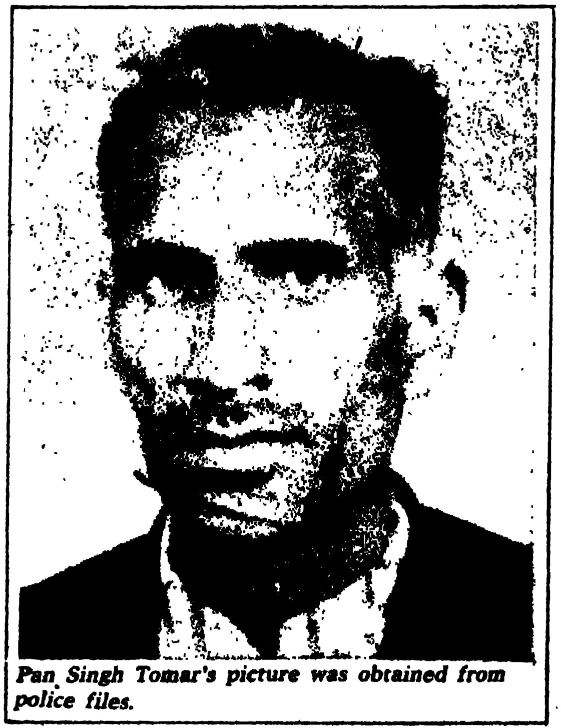


An artist's conception, based on descriptions by people who have seen her, of what Phoolan Devi looks like.

We went to the ravines of Chambal and desolate stretches of U.P. (where dacoit queen Phoolan Devi, clad in jeans and armed with a sten gun, reigns) to bring you this in-depth report on how these three have become both terrors and legends.

Dacoit queen Putlibai being worshipped in a poor household

DHARM VIR JAYNER



Pan Singh Tomar's picture was obtained from police files.

Phoolan Devi: Queen of Dacoits

She wears jeans. She carries a sten gun, which she can use with great accuracy and without any mercy. She belongs to a backward caste, and she hates the upper caste thakurs because they have oppressed her and her community. She has been abducted and raped repeatedly by two thakur gangleaders who killed her lover to get her. She became a dacoit after she was spurned by her husband and spat on by society. Today, she is the most powerful, the most wanted dacoit in Uttar Pradesh. And she will have her revenge, on both the thakurs and society.

On 14 February she led her gang of backward caste dacoits to the thakur village of Behmai in UP and shot dead all those who had abetted in her capture and rape. And laughing with the pride of a woman who has taken her revenge, taunting the police to capture her, she left. The UP police have mounted a massive hunt for her, but the only casualty, till the moment of writing, has been the chief of UP police, Mahendra Singh, who has had to be removed because of his failure to get Phoolan Devi. **SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA** went out into the desolate ravines between the Ganga and the Jamuna, where Phoolan Devi operates, to find out the fascinating story

13 AUGUST 1980: Vikram Mallah, the leading dacoit operating in Etawah, Jalaun, Kanpur and Hamirpur districts of UP is shot dead while asleep under a *babul* tree with his uncle Barelal at Baijamau village in Kanpur district. The police take the credit for the "encounter", but local villagers know that Vikram Mallah was slain by his former colleagues, Lalaram Singh and Sriram Singh, who had fallen out with Vikram over the attentions of Phoolan Devi, Vikram's mistress. After killing Vikram, the Singh brothers kidnap Phoolan and take her by boat to Behmai, a thakur-dominated hamlet on the banks of the Yamuna. During her captivity at Behmai, Phoolan is repeatedly raped by the two Singh brothers. One night Phoolan is taken to a well outside the house of the village *pradhan*, Taqdir Singh, and made to draw water out of the well throughout the night. On the fourth day, her captors finally take pity on her tears and set her free. Phoolan returns to her father's home in Gorhapurwa, Jalaun district, across the Yamuna and plans out her strategy of revenge.

14 February, 1981: The villagers of Behmai see Phoolan after a lapse of five months. But it is no more the helpless Phoolan they had seen in August. This time Phoolan is wearing a police uniform and along with her are 25 armed men, belonging to the gangs of Ram Autar Mallah, Balwan Gadaria, Man Singh Yadav, Raghunath Mallah and the supreme leader of all these gangs, "Baba" Mustaquim (though Mustaquim himself was not present). Phoolan has come to Behmai with two motives—one, she has information that Lalaram and Sriram are hiding in the village and, two, to take revenge not only on the Singh brothers but also the thakurs of Behmai, who had abetted the Singh brothers during the four days when Phoolan was humiliated in the village. She does not get the Singh brothers (who were a few kilometres away at that time, in Damanpur village), but picks out the sturdy thakurs of the village, makes them march out of Behmai in single file, takes them to a mud wall outside the village and with a burst of carbine fire puts 20 of them to death.

Behmai, which does not figure in any of the maps available with the district authorities of Kanpur (perhaps because it has a miniscule population of 450, or because it is so deep in the Yamuna ravines that the survey teams have never ventured there), hits the headlines not only in the national but the international press also. Teams of reporters are sent out by London and Paris based newspapers to cover the single-largest massacre by dacoits in India. The state administration is jolted into activity. The incident severely damages the prestige of the local thakurs and costs the inspector-general of UP police, Mahendra Singh, who has survived the Narainpur and Moradabad disturbances, his job.

TO the north-east of Kanpur district flows the Ganga and to its south-west the Yamuna is flanked by ravines. The Yamuna ravines of Kanpur district along with Banda, Hamirpur, Etah, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Etawah, Agra and Jalaun districts, are the stomping ground of dacoits. This area of UP adjoins the Chambal ravines, which in turn form the natural boundary between UP and Madhya Pradesh. The topography of the region is favourable to the dacoits and inhospitable to the police. Villages are not linked by road and the only communication channel to the hamlets on the bank and the Yamuna are dusty bullock-cart tracks which wind their way across the ravines and *arhar* fields. The soil here is treacherous—the black alluvial soil of the Yamuna ravines becomes slippery after the rains. Only jeeps can negotiate these dust tracks, that too driving at a maximum speed of [illegible] kmph. The track which dips suddenly is too narrow at most places to allow bullock cart and a jeep to pass each other. One has to make way for the other. To reach Behmai, 14 km of such tracks have to be traversed after leaving the main road at Rajpur. In such terrain the police do not have enough jeeps to fight the dacoit menace and often have to move on foot. The dacoits of this region also move on foot, unlike the horse-riding dacoits in films, but naturally they are more fleet-footed. Of the 19 police stations under the SP (rural area) of Kanpur, only five have jeeps. Of the six circle officers in Kanpur (rural area) only four have vehicles. So, along with the SP's personal vehicle, the entire district police in the rural area have just te vehicles!

Jalaun district is no differen Phoolan Devi was born in the house Devidin Kewat sometime in 1957 Gorhapurwa village under the Kal police station of the district. Gorh purwa is situated at the junction Yamuna and its tributary None. De vidin is a poor farmer, owning only tw bighas of land. The family has fiv daughters and a son. Phoolan is th second daughter, her elder sister, Ruk mani, is married to Rampal and stay with her husband at Budhadana, nea Auraiya, the headquaters of Jalaun Her 13-year-old brother, Shivnarai stays with Rukmani at Budhadana an studies in the seventh class. Phoolan younger sister, Ramkali (16) is ma ried to Babu Mallah of Tyoga villag across the river, in Bhognipur polic circle of Kanpur. Phoolan's moth stays with her husband at Gorhapur along with her two younger daughter the youngest being four years old. Tw bighas of land cannot feed a family. the father works as a partime mas and the mother and the younger si ters twine ropes to earn money f subsistence.

Phoolan (24) was an ordinary v lage girl till a few years back. Marri at the age of ten to Puttilal of Mahes pur, she found it difficult to get alo with her husband who was ten yea her senior. This was Puttilal's second marriage. Phoolan's father had married her off on the condition that her *gohona* (a custom prevalent among villagers in UP and Bihar under which the bride stays with her father for some time after marriage till the bridegroom pays a dowry in order to claim her) would be after three years, as she was sickly then. But within three months of her marriage Puttilal insisted that she be sent to Maheshpur as he needed someone to do the cooking. After her marriage Phoolan was seldom allowed to visit her father's home. Once when she learnt that her mother was ill and her huband refused to let her go to Gorhapurwa, she ran away to her parental village. Puttilal came within a few days and insisted on getting his dowry back, an indication that he wanted a divorce. He refused to take Phoolan back. Puttilal soon remarried.

Phoolan's parents wanted her also to remarry, but she insisted on going back to her husband's home. She ran away from her village when she was pressurised to remarry. The village elders held a panchayat and it was decided that she be kept in the house of her father's elder brother, Gurudayal Kewat, where she stayed for four months. Gurudayal's son, Maiyadin, insisted on her being sent back to Puttilal's home and he took her to Maheshpur and left her there. The story thereafter is a familiar one. The *sautan* (Puttilal's new wife) illtreated Pholan and her husband and her in-laws encouraged this. She was often beaten up. One day Puttilal took Phoolan back to Gorhapurwa and when Maiyadin refused to let her enter her uncle's home, Puttilal left her on the doorsteps and went away.

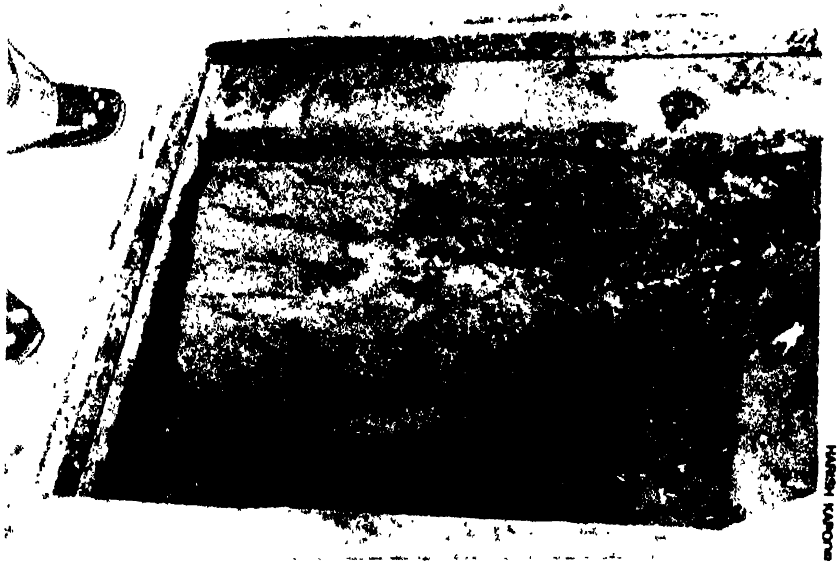
Meanwhile, a dispute had arisen between Phoolan's father and her uncle over ancestral property. Gurudayal had duped his younger brother in a land deal. As a result, he had 40 bighas of land while Devidin had two. Phoolan took up the cudgels and fought the case on behalf of her father before the village panchayat. But she lost.

Phoolan, by then, had blossomed into a 16-year-old attractive village belle. Sensing the potentialities of Phoolan, who could be a formidable opponent, Maiyadin started scheming against her. To begin with, he floated rumours about her character and alleged that she had incestuous relations with another cousin, Indrajit. Hearing all this, the son of the village sarpanch, Sokchand, one day tried to take liberties with her. She slapped him and he in turn beat her up with his shoes, all in full public view.

Unhappy with the life in her village, Phoolan crossed the Yamuna and went away to a cousin's home in Tyoga in Kanpur district. It was at Tyoga that she first came in close contact with dacoits. There she met Kailash, who was also a mallah by caste. Kailash was an associate of Vikram Mallah. According to one version, Kailash took Phoolan away to Kanpur city and married her in court. Whatever be the history of her relationship with Kailash, it was through Kailash that she met Vikram Mallah. (According to the information available with the police, she met Vikram through one Mataprasad, who used to frequent her village. Mataprasad was married to a girl in Gohani, Vikram's village, and that is how he knew Vikram. But the other version, culled during this correspondent's visit to Gorhapurwa, seems more authentic. Moreover, the police records do not have the entire story of how she became a dacoit.)

Vikram Mallah, who became a terror in the Yamuna ravines, was initially a petty thief who used to act as an informer of Lalaram Singh and Sriram Singh's gang. Once when the Singh brothers were sent to jail, Vikram joined their gang and in course of time emerged as the *sardar*. He ruled the gang till he was slain by the Singh brothers on 13 August last year. It is not known when Phoolan first committed a robbery, but according to police records, it was a dacoity in her cousin Maiyadin's house in Gorhapurwa sometime in 1978. In the first information report lodged with the Kalpi police station, Maiyadin recorded Phoolan's name as one of those who

The *Sholay* effect?



HARISH KAPOOR

Underground tunnel in a house in Gorhapurwa used by dacoits

The police officers dealing with the anti-dacoity operations in UP blame the censors for passing certain shots in the multi-starrer *Sholay*, first screened in 1975, which they feel inspired the dacoits to run amuck. The film had a sequence in which the dacoits killed the members of a family, while the head of the family—their real enemy—was away. The sequence was pictured in all its gruesome detail with slow-motion shots lingering over each individual killing. In most of the mass killings by dacoits in UP in recent years, it was the family or friends of the man against whom the dacoits sought revenge, who were killed while he was away.

Mohan Das Menon, who has dealt with the problem of dacoity for the past few years during his postings at Morena (Madhya Pradesh), Agra and Kanpur (he has been the SP in charge of anti-dacoity operations, based in Agra for some time and has now been given concurrent charge as SP, Kanpur (rural area), told me that in three cases, while interrogating arrested dacoits, he was told that they had been influenced by this shot. One dacoit told Menon during interrogation: "*Neta kahte the abto* Sholay *jaisa badla lenge.* (The leader of the gang said that now we would take revenge in the Sholay style)."

Menon said that Behmai was just the continuation of a series of mass killings by dacoits in the past few years, though the number killed at Behmai was the highest. He listed some of the earlier mass murders: 12 were killed by the Geetam gang in early 1979, Chhabiram's gang killed all members of the family of one Badshah in Shahjehanpur (Badshah had some litigation with Chhabiram's family; he is still alive), and last year 12 of a family were liquidated by Vaidyaram's gang in Agra. The main enemy of the gang in this case too survived.

committed the dacoity. The police records show that she had no criminal record before the dacoity in Maiyadin's house. Could it be possible that an act of revenge by Maiyadin, who had been scheming against Phoolan for some time in the past since the land dispute, brought Vikram Mallah's mistress into the crime records?

ON January 1979 some goods looted from Maiyadin's house were recovered from Phoolan and she was arrested and taken to Kalpi police station. She was tried by a court in Auraiya and convicted. She had to remain in jail for only 20 days before she was bailed out by two thakurs of Narihan village, Narain Singh and Jaikaran Singh, who were the employers of her father, Devidin. Interestingly, though Pholan was kept in custody at Kalpi police station for three days and at Auraiya jail for 20 days, she was not photographed. Perhaps the police never realised that they had a potential 10,000 rupee award-carrying criminal in their custody. This is an example of the laxity of the police machinery in the dacoit-infested areas. After all, when someone is arrested on charges of either possessing goods stolen by dacoits or for harbouring dacoits, the person must be suspected to have links with dacoits. Had the Jalaun police photographed her in 1979, then today half of their problems would have been solved. At present the police have to rely only on descriptions of Phoolan given by the villagers and the policemen who had seen her at the Kalpi police station and Auraiya jail.

According to the description available with the police, Phoolan has a wheatish complexion, a round face with pimple marks, is of medium height and strong build, has masculine hands and feet and "average" eyes, nose and ears. Such a description does not get anyone very far. When the Kanpur daily, *Aaj* published a photograph of Phoolan's younger sister, Ramkali, the police constable at Kalpi who had seen Phoolan, said that Ramkali bore a striking resemblance to her dacoit-sister.

Release on bail did not solve Phoolan's problems. The two thakurs of Narihan took full advantage of her helplessness and perhaps this sowed the seeds of hatred towards thakurs in Phoolan's heart. The feeling was further reinforced by Vikram's death and the treatment she received at the hands of the Behmai thakurs in August last year. Phoolan ran away from Narihan and returned to Gorhapurwa. While her second husband, Kailash, could not save her from humiliation at the hands of the Narihan thakurs, he introduced Phoolan to Babu Gujar, a dreaded dacoit senior to Vikram Mallah. While she was in Gorhapurwa, Phoolan attended many court hearings of her case at Auraiya, where she used to go along with her brother. One day Babu Gujar, along with Vikram, came to Gorhapurwa and took Phoolan

A legend called Phoolan

AJAY KUMAR COURTESY AAJ

Phoolan's mother Moola and younger sister Munni outside their house in Gorhapurwa

"IT seems that Gorhapurwa will slowly become a tourist attraction," said Dhruv Lal Yadav, station officer of the Kalpi police station in Jalaun district, when I asked him the way to Phoolan's village which comes under his jurisdiction. "Your car cannot go there, so come with me, I have to go for a round of that area," said Yadav. So off we went, in his jeep, to the village which has produced the woman whom the entire state administration of UP is looking for.

We drove for a short distance along the Kalpi-Jhansi road, a state highway, and turned right to another metalled road, which goes to Madaripur. At Harraipur, after having driven five km on the Madaripur road, we branched off to a dusty road which became a bullock-cart track after we passed the PAC outpost at Mangraul. The jeep drove at precarious angles down the dust track, which could hardly take its full width. Three km down this dust track, and we came upon a fair-sized village, Gorhapurwa.

My mission was to meet Phoolan's family. A few days earlier her sister and mother had spoken to a correspondent of *Aaj* and also allowed themselves to be photographed. But my luck was not so good. Apparently, taken aback by the front-page publicity given by *Aaj* that morning (23 February), the two women had left the village. The husband of Phoolan's younger sister, Ramkali, had come from across the river to take her away. Only Phoolan's two youngest sisters, aged around eight and four, were in the house, which overlooks the confluence of the None and the Yamuna, which form the western and northern boundaries, respectively, of the village.

Phoolan's house is fascinating. As you enter through the front verandah, you reach a room that opens into a courtyard which is a few feet higher than the level of the room. The courtyard leads to another room, a few feet higher again, which opens into yet another courtyard, which is at a still higher plane than the room. There is a rear exit from this courtyard, by which you can disappear into the house behind. Dhruv Lal Yadav told me that most houses in the villages in the ravines were like this. Therefore, if the villagers were harbouring dacoits, it became extremely difficult for the police to track them down because by the time information reached the police the gang moved from one house to another and disappeared.

From the backyard of Phoolan's house you can have a clear view of the entire riverfront and the ravines. This could be an ideal observation post for the dacoits, Yadav pointed out.

When the *Aaj* correspondent spoke to the family a few days ago, he asked Phoolan's mother, Moola, whether her daughter visited her sometimes. Moola replied: "*Kabahun nahin awat hai. Wa khooni hai. Hamen wake paisaki jaroorat nahin hai* (She never comes. She is a murderer. We do not need her money).

When the correspondent asked 16-year-old Ramkali as to how Phoolan had become a murderer, she snapped back: "*Aaj hamahun laike chalau, khawao piwao, goli chalibo sikhabau, hamahun khooni ban jaihen* (today you take me along, give me good food and drinks, teach me how to use a gun, I too will become a murderer)." Perhaps that partly explains the phenomenon called Phoolan Devi.

A boon to Youth Congress(I)

The Behmai incident has been a godsend for the Youth Congress(I) unit in UP, led by Sanjay Singh, MLA, to snipe at the government. Sanjay Singh, who is the son-in-law of the brother of Chief Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, had been ignored by the state leadership for some time after the death of Sanjay Gandhi. Being the son of the raja of Amethi, the constituency of Sanjay Gandhi, Sanjay Singh had enjoyed top patronage during Sanjay Gandhi's lifetime. He, therefore, lost no time in attacking the state government after the Behmai massacre and demanded the sacking of the IGP, Mahendra Singh. A day later Mahendra Singh was removed from the post of IGP.

That was not all. On 25 February, when the Chief Minister went to Bhognipur to condole the death of inspector Moolchand, who had died in an encounter, Sanjay Singh was visiting Behmai along with Kanpur MLA Bhoodhar Mishra and YC(I) leader Jagadambika Pal. He had visited Bhognipur hours before the CM's arrival and held a meeting with the new IGP, N. K. Verma, at the Bhognipur inspection bungalow.

At Behmai Sanjay Singh offered to pay for five guns to be given to those whom the police approved. This was a thoughtful gesture. For, in Behmai, the thakurs are not so poor as to accept the *dhotis* and blankets which are being offered by the government. What they need is guns, and anybody prepared to give this wins their heart.

AJAY KUMAR COURTESY 'AAJ'

Phoolan's younger sister Ramkali who is said to resemble Phoolan

away. There are two versions of the reaction of her family to this incident. According to one, the family heaved a sign of relief, as a married daughter staying away from her in-laws is always a liability in villages. According to the other version, when Phoolan's mother went to the Kalpi thana to lodge a complaint of kidnapping, she was ignored. Whatever be the truth, in the eyes of the law, Phoolan had jumped bail and had become an absconder.

Babu Gujar proved to be another tormentor for Phoolan. A senior police officer told me that in all likelihood Phoolan's heart turned to stone after her association with Babu Gujar, who used to often rape her in front of the other gang members. This, in fact, proved to be the undoing of Babu Gujar. Because of such abominable behaviour, Vikram, then a junior member of the gang, started to hate Babu Gujar. On 20 July, 1979, Vikram killed Babu Gujar at a Kali tample four km from Auraiya in a gun duel. Thereafter, Phoolan had an uninterrupted affair with Vikram till the latter's death on 13 August, 1980. Vikram taught Phoolan the use of firearms and she started accompanying him on his raids, donning a police uniform.

Lalaram Singh and Sriram Singh were released from jail in June 1980. They bore a grudge against Vikram Mallah because during their period of captivity he had taken over the leadership of the gang. Moreover, they coveted Phoolan, who refused to even look at them because she was the *sardar's* mistress.

After Vikram's death and Phoolan's humiliation at the hands of the Singh brothers, she returned to Gorhapurwa and established contact with Vikram's gang member, Mansingh Yadav. She committed a number of dacoities along with Mansingh, including road hold-ups. One striking feature of the raids conducted by Phoolan's gang throughout has been mass killings. In fact, the people of Behmai should not have been taken by surprise at all—in December 1980 Phoolan had gone to Baijamau, the place where Vikram was slain, and looted 90 houses as an act of revenge. Behmai was sure to be her target one day and she struck on 14 February 1981 after she had managed to line up the gangs of Ram Autar, Balwan Garadia, Raghunath Mallah and Jagram Chamar and obtain the blessings of "Baba" Mustaquim.

There are two other "dacoit beauties," besides Phoolan, who are operating in the Yamuna ravines—Kusuma Nain (belonging to the barber caste), who is the mistress of the two Singh brothers, Lalaram and Sriram,

Heads roll in the police

"Narainpur and Moradabad he survived, but Behmai was the undoing of IGP Mahendra Singh," a senior journalist of Lucknow said when N. K. Verma was made the new IGP. Mahendra Singh was kicked up to the newly created post of director-general of police, where he can remain a sleeping member of the police setup till his retirement in 1982. That was not the only change in the higher echelons of the UP police. Alok B. Lal, a young IPS officer who was the SP (rural area) of Kanpur, was transferred, and Mohan Das Menon, the SP (anti-dacoity operations) was given concurrent charge of the post of SP (rural areas) of Kanpur. But while Mahendra Singh's departure had been demanded by politicians of all hues for some time, the way in which Alok Lal was removed smacked of political arbitrariness.

Alok Lal was on leave in Lucknow on 14 February when he learnt about the Behmai massacre. He immediately rushed back to Kanpur and took charge of the situation. During his absence the duties of the SP (RA) were being discharged by the SSP of Kanpur, Bijay Nath Singh, who had earlier been the SP of Moradabad (during the August 1980 riots). But the reward Alok Lal got for cancelling his leave and rushing back was to be summarily transferred on 22 February. He was with the IGP and the home minister, Rajendra Tripathi, from 8 am to 6.30 pm that day. But they never told him anything. Only at night was he served with his transfer orders.

Confluence of the Yamuna and None rivers at Gorhapurwa

and Meera Thakur, who was the mistress of Balwan Garadia, the dacoit who was killed in an encounter on 24 February. What were these two women doing when Phoolan was slaying the thakurs of Gorhapurwa? While Meera Thakur was with the gang of Phoolan (though not present on the scene), Kusuma Nain was with her own gang at Damanpur, within a few km of Behmai, where she had taken her lovers, Lalaram and Sriram, to settle an old land dispute.

Some 12 years back Shivnarain Nai of Damanpur had sold a plot of land to Bishwambher Thakur, who had taken possession of the land and not paid the full amount. Kusuma Nain prevailed upon the Singh brothers to mediate in the dispute and get a fair deal for Shivnarain Nai. It was because of this that Lalaram and Sriram Singh were at Damanpur (a few km from Behmai) on 14 February. Phoolan may have thought that they would be at Behmai instead. Therefore, she struck with the force of the combined gang

As the news of the Behmai incident reached the Singh brothers at Damanpur, they rushed to challenge Phoolan's fleeting gang and engaged it at Chholapur, in between Behmai and Khojarampur The gang of the thakurs is said to have even sought the help of the PAC outfit posted at Khojarampur (only three km from Behmai), by shouting over a megaphone that they were Lalaram and Sriram and they wanted the help of the PAC in fighting Phoolan's gang. But the PAC men did not react According to the villagers, when one resident of Behmai, Balmukand, reached the PAC outpost at Khojarampur, he found that the PAC jawans were busy playing volleyball and they refused to listen to him The police deny this. They say that the PAC had taken immediate action But the fact remains that the PAC unit at Khojarampur did not manage to challenge Phoolan's fleeing gang. This task was ironically left to another dacoit gang.

Phoolan's gang crossed the Yamuna at Zari to go to Mukdalan, which is situated across the None river opposite Gorhapurwa. Dhruv Lal Yadav, the station officer of Kalpi police station, was at that time visiting the Mangraul PAC outpost, near Gorhapurwa. He heard a gun shot, apparently fired by the gang to inform the villagers of Gorhapurwa that they were around and food be sent to them. Dhruv Lal Yadav took one section of the PAC and [illegible] and crossed the [illegible] deep water to reach Mukdalan [illegible] challenged the gang. There was a brief battle, but the gang managed to escape through the arhar fields. They, however, left behind looted goods. It was through the looted goods that the police later realised that the gang challenged by Dhruv Lal Yadav was none other than the one which had committed the Behmai massacre.

Here again the shortcomings of the police become apparent. The crime having been committed in Kanpur district, it took some time for the information to reach the Kalpi police in Jalaun district. It was only a matter of chance that SO Dhruv Lal Yadav was at Mangraul and he took the initiative to challenge the dacoits. Yadav told me that the police would perhaps never get such a golden opportunity again. All the top dacoits of various gangs were operating in the same area along with their most valuable members on the night of 14-15 February when they were challenged at Mukdalan. Yadav, who has a reputation of being a brave officer (and he proved it on 24 February in the encounter with Balwan Gadaria when he killed him), remorsefully told me that if only he knew the nature of the gang he was engaging, he would have gone with more troops The encounter at Mukdalan was the last time the police came in contact with Phoolan. Till 26 February, the day I left Kalpi after spending a few days at the anti-dacoity operations control headquarters in the hope that Phoolan would be nabbed, she had managed to elude the lawmen, though the police said that they were tracking her movements across the ravines closely and were confident of nabbing her within a few days. The police strategy, in her case, seems to be to arrest and try her instead of killing her in an encounter. Phoolan's being a woman may have something to do with this.

Whatever it be, the daughter of Devidin Kewat has certainly become a legend.

"Emperor" Malkhan Singh

He has his own imported, inflatable boat which he uses to cross the many rivers of the ravines. He does not eat food cooked by anyone else for fear he may be poisoned. He shifts camp after every meal. On an average night he might walk as much as 40 kilometres. He loves his growing reputation of the Robin Hood of the 1980s: he steals from the rich, and gives a little bit away to the poor.

He is more respected by the people than feared. He started his life as a *baghi* (rebel) more than four years ago, and in this time he has become the most powerful dacoit in the fearsome ravines of the Chambal. The price on his head is the highest for any outlaw today: Rs 70,000. His name is "Emperor" Malkhan.

SAUMITRA BANERJEE went through forgotten dirttracks in the interior of the Chambal region to ferret out the history of this legend.

IT was 9 January 1981. Word had just reached the superintendent of police of Madhya Pradesh's Datia district that one of the most wanted dacoits of Chambal was hiding in the nearby Jignia forest of Gwalior district. He promptly informed his counterpart in Gwalior: the two moved in with their forces. By 11 30 they had encircled the jungle. Suddenly a shot rang out: the dacoits had spotted the police. The battle lasted for an hour—but the dacoits were never really in trouble. Their guns were better: their armoury included even such sophisticated weapons as sten guns and self-loading rifles (SLRs). Secondly, they had the strategic advantage of height; they were on top of a hillock. Within an hour, the 70-strong gang had escaped the police net and was on its way to the forests of Ratangarh and Chitaipali. The police had anticipated such a line of retreat, and lain an ambush on the route. But the dacoits managed to clear this ambush easily enough: by two thirty in the afternoon they had disappeared. All that the police could capture was some utensils and stray clothes

The police did not want utensils and clothes; they wanted Malkhan Singh, the "Emperor of *Baghis* (Rebels)"—as the dacoits are called in Madhya Pradesh. He was the most-wanted *baghi*, with a reward of Rs 70,000 on his head, currently the highest reward being offered for an outlaw. The police have still not managed to catch Malkhan Singh.

In his region, Malkhan Singh is a kind of an emperor. He is fond of his Robin Hood image, and he does help those among the poor who he wants to help. He travels, like other dacoits, mainly on foot (the dacoit on horseback lives only in Hindi films), but he has his own personal inflatable boat (imported) to help him cross the rivers which he often has to traverse in order to keep a step ahead of the law. He moves freely enough among the villages, where he is, in fact, more respected than feared. He does not normally kill or loot, preferring to make his money by kidnapping the offspring of rich fathers. And he is generous in the manner of a benevolent feudal.

But he was born poor, in 1943, to a *mirdha* family in Belao village of the dacoit-infested Bhind district. He did manage to study till class three in the village *pathshala*, but spent most of his time grazing his few cattle in the ravines of the river Baisli which flows beside his village. These ravines were frequented by dacoits, and this was where he first came into contact with them—particularly a dacoit called Girdvalia who, like Malkhan, was also a *mirdha* by caste; indeed, he was a distant relative. Malkhan was an errand boy for the dacoits then: he would fetch cigarettes, matches and other small items of need from the village shop and pass them on to the outlaws. His rewards were generally lavish tips, but a young boy might be excused for feeling a romantic thrill at the association with dacoits. The dacoits got to know him, and trust him.

But Malkhan Singh stayed away from police records—until 1970. He was arrested for shooting down a man in his village, Kallu, over a petty dispute. A case under section 302 of the IPC was started; the sessions court of Bhind gave him life imprisonment. Malkhan Singh appealed to the Gwalior high court, which let him free on a bail of Rs 10,000, in 1971. This was also the year that Malkhan Singh was elected a member of the village *panch*. But the *sarpanch*, Kailash Narain, was an old enemy: the two had always been in opposite camps—for instance when Narain joined the Congress, Malkhan Singh became a supporter of the other strong political party in his area, the Socialist Party.

Malkhan Singh was convinced that it was Kailash Narain who had tried his level best to get him convicted in the Kallu murder case. And one wonders if Malkhan Singh was too far from the truth: all those who gave evidence against Malkhan Singh were close to Kailash Narain. This was not all. In 1973, a friend of Malkhan Singh, Jagannath, was murdered. Two people were arrested: Harilal and Mansukh, both harijans—and both supporters of Kailash Narain.

However Malkhan Singh still did not react, until provoked by two incidents in quick succession. First, towards the end of 1975, Kailash Narain tried to get Malkhan Singh removed from the *panch* on the grounds that he had still not been cleared of murder by the courts; a resolution to this effect was introduced by Narain. Around the same time, Nathuram, a close relative of Kailash Narain, eloped with a lady from Malkhan Singh's family. This Malkhan Singh took as a personal affront. He reported this to the police, but nothing happened. Malkhan Singh decided to take the law into his own hands.

Around 10.30 on the morning of 5 May 1976, Kailash Narain was sitting outside the house of Ram Saran in his village, chatting. Malkhan Singh, armed with a sten gun, approached, and from a distance of about 20 feet let loose a volley of bullets. The first bullet hit Kailash Narain on his arm, and as he fell forward, the rest of the bullets hit Sudama Singh, who was sitting next to Kailash Narain. Sudama Singh died on the spot. Kailash Narain, it so happened, survived.

Malkhan Singh knew precisely what his future was going to be after this shooting. He did not hang around waiting for the police. He took his gun and made his way straight to the ravines of the famous Chambal river. He had now become a *baghi*, a rebel from the world of "law and order."

Along with Malkhan Singh left Ram Sunehri and his brother Ram Karan Singh. And once in the ravines, Ghanshyam (alias Ghansa) joined them. In a couple of months the gang took shape; today it is the most feared gang of the Chambal.

Kailash Narain had survived Malkhan Singh's attack, so the first priority of the gang became the murder of Narain. Narain took precautions, however, always moving around with armed guards; armed policemen were posted at his house. Malkhan Singh waited. He had, in the meanwhile, another score to settle too: to take revenge for the murder of his friend Jagannath. But the two harijans who had killed Jagannath were in police custody, so he decided to kill those close to them. On the night of 7-8 October 1976 Malkhan Singh, along with Ghanshyam, Ram Sunehri and Ram Singh entered the village of Mankabagh under the cover of darkness. Gangole and Mewaram were resting in their houses. They were dragged out and shot dead Malkhan Singh and his gang disappeared as quietly as they had come. They did not trouble or harass anyone else.

It is now four years since he became a dacoit, and Malkhan Singh has raised his strength from a band of four to a small army of 70. His area of operation is around the *panchnada*, where the five rivers—Chambal, Jamuna, Kuanri, Sindh and Pahoj—intersect on the border of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and where the ravines are deepest and the jungles most dense: it is from here that Malkhan Singh conducts all his operations, sometimes slipping into the Agra and Etawah districts of UP and sometimes into the Bharatpur district of Rajasthan to either commit his crimes, escape the police or meet villagers.

Within the very first year, Malkhan Singh was able to establish four separate gangs owing allegiance to him, one of which he controlled directly; the other three were in the charge of his three closest lieutenants, Ghanshyam, Mustaqim (who also figures in the Phoolan Devi story, since he helped her assault the thakur village of Behmai) and Soghar Singh. Recently, Mustaqim and Ghanshyam broke away to become completely independent. (According to a report published on 4 March, Mustaqim was shot dead by the police during their intensive hunt for dacoits after the Phoolan Devi incident. But one should wait for further confirmation before accepting that as the full truth. The police often, and for understandable reasons, make mistakes in identification after an encounter with dacoits.)

Malkhan Singh, who operates mainly in Bhind, Gwalior, Morena and Datia, has what might even be called a good reputation among the people: the Robin Hood syndrome once again. There are some reasons for this. To begin with, he does not indulge in wanton murder. At best, during the four years, he has committed 20 murders—a relatively small figure compared to the 400 or more murders that a reformed dacoit like Mohar Singh is

Where do dacoits get their weapons from?

HARISH KAPOOR

The arms that the dacoits use are often far more sophisticated than those of the police After one recent encounter, for instance, the police found that the cartridges the dacoits had used had been manufactured more recently than those used by the police Besides, it is common to find dacoits like Malkhan Singh and members of his gang using weapons like Self Loading Rifles (SLR), Thompson Machine Carbines (TMC) and Mausers, which gives them a clear upper hand against the police. Malkhan Singh, interestingly, has managed to lay his hands on hand grenades as well.

The sources are many. After the 1972 surrender, though 511 dacoits surrendered, only 267 arms were turned in to the police It is common knowledge that most of the leading dacoits had more than one weapon per member of the gang. What in effect happened at the time of the 1977 surrender was that the dacoits either sold off their weapons to those who did not surrender or a majority of them kept their weapons with trusted people—in case they were ever needed again.

The Indian army had issued, periodically, some weapons to the residents of villages on the Indo-Pak border, especially during war time, to guard themselves. A number of such weapons have found their way into the ravines of central India. Then there are the legally licensed arms. In Morena and Bhind districts, for instance a large number of villagers have been issued licensed arms; these instead of being used against dacoits are often sold to them. In the districts of Gwalior, Morena and Bhind there are about three lakh licensed arms in circulation—besides a horde of unlicensed ones

But the main sources of sophisticated weapons are usually the ordnance depots of the army. Arms abandoned by the army especially during the Indo-Pak and Indo-China wars were sold through often to the dacoit gangs. An SLR lost during the 1971 war was found with Mohar Singh within three months of its being reported missing Besides, gunrunning is a very lucrative profession for people living in the border areas. Weapons are smuggled in from Pakistan and China and then sold to agents who in turn sell the weapons to the dacoits at steep prices. (A .303 bore rifle, for example, can fetch Rs 15,000) Said surrendered dacoit Lukka (Lokman) Singh: "From Morena and Bhind for instance, there are a number of people in the army These people have very good contacts with the people in the ordnance depots When they come home on holiday they bring along with them guns and cartridges which they sell and make some money. This is one important source for *baghis*." Recently, Braj Mohan Singh an army *jawan* posted at Banna, near Jhansi, was arrested in Gwalior and the police recovered 350 SLR cartridges from him.

Besides, of course, there is a proliferation of countrymade guns—popularly known as *katta*. Dacoits who [illegible] their hands on [illegible] make do with kattas [illegible] manufactured in the [illegible] Gwalior and Agra

Malkhan's village surrounded by ravines

DHARM VIR JAYNER

alleged to have committed. This the police accept too. And his main source of income is not through loot, where the chances of the poor being partially affected exist. His main income is from kidnapping, and he gets an average ransom of Rs 50,000. Now, there is no point in kidnapping a poor man's child, and obviously he doesn't. So the poor, who are not affected by his dacoity but are often the beneficiaries of his generosity, talk warmly of him. The police know of at least 28 kidnappings committed by Malkhan Singh, which would mean a minimum revenue of about Rs 14 lakhs for the gang so far. As far as the distribution of the loot is concerned, Malkhan Singh takes half, then expenses for the upkeep of the gang are deducted, and the rest is divided among the members, the importance and share of each member being determined by the quality of the weapon that a particular gang member possesses.

Revenge is the source, and revenge continues to be the inspiration: however successful Malkhan Singh may have become, he never forgot that he took to this life of crime because of a man called Kailash Narain. And revenge had to be taken. Malkhan Singh realised that he himself had now become too big a target, the police everywhere were on the lookout for him, he would be spotted easily. So he would get someone else to do the job for him. It was planned that Kashiram, an ordinary and unknown member of his gang, would go to Kailash Narain and shoot him when he was least suspicious—in the open.

On 14 September *sarpanch* Kailash Narain was at his house in Bhind city. In the evening, he went that day for his prayers to the Shankar temple, as was his practice. After prayers, Narain went into a shop. The armed escort who always accompanied him relaxed, and went to another shop to buy some tobacco. This was the moment that Kashiram had been looking for. He crept up from behind and shot Kailash Narain with a countrymade revolver. Kashiram was caught, but this time Kailash Narain did not survive. And Malkhan Singh said thank you to Kashiram in his own way. A week after Kashiram was arrested, Malkhan Singh raided Kashiram's village and killed four of Kashiram's worst enemies.

Life as a dacoit is hardly all fun and games. It means being hounded by the police day and night; it means guarding against an attack from any quarter—including from gang members. For instance, Malkhan never sleeps the full night in any one place. He moves camp after every meal. He

What do ex-dacoits do?

Mohar Singh and Saumitra Banerjee

DHARM VIR JAYNER

What are the two most notorious ex-dacoits doing today? Mohar Singh once had a reward of Rs 2.5 lakhs on his head; he has now taken to farming and politics. He campaigned actively for the Congress(I) in the last Assembly elections. As he told this correspondent, "There is no other alternative to Mrs Gandhi and, now that I have surrendered, I will work for her party. In the next Lok Sabha elections if Charan Singh stands from Baghpat, I will contest against him on the Congress(I) ticket. I know I will get the ticket. There must be someone to protect the rights of the *gujjars* in that area. Charan Singh's supporters harass them. I think ex-dacoits have a very good chance of doing well in politics. After all, they have a very heroic image. I will definitely take to politics seriously."

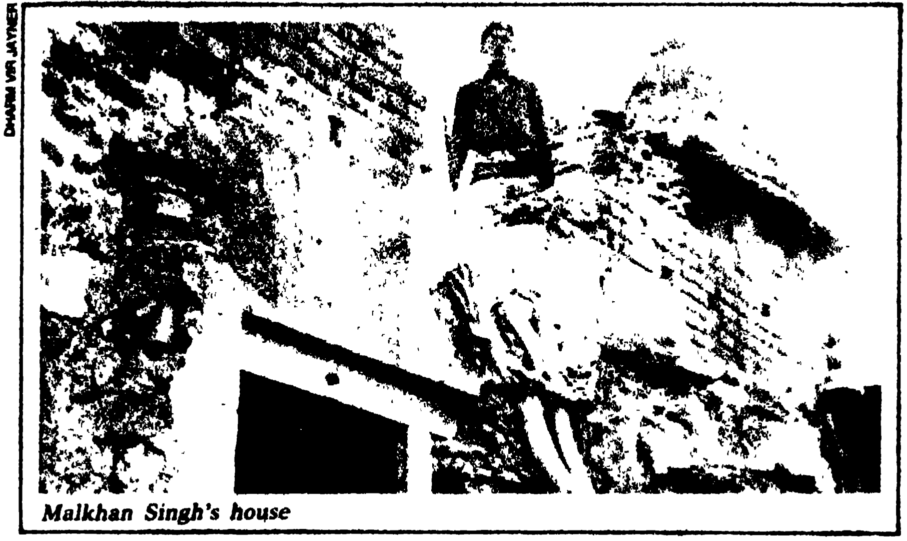
But stranger is the story of Madho Singh. From being a dacoit who had a reward of Rs. 1.5 lakhs on his head, he has now become a magician. And he made his maiden public appearance recently at a fair held in Gwalior on 25 December. He was a huge success too, largely because of the advance publicity he had received. In almost all the daily papers of Gwalior, advertisements had appeared that ex-dacoit Madho Singh would give a magic show. It read: "Good news: There is no need to wait any longer. Yesterday's dacoit has become today's Great Magician Madho Singh...Yes, Sir, the same Madho Singh on whose head there was a reward of Rs 1.5 lakhs. Yes, these days he is acting as the hero of three films; he is a person about whom thousands of authors have written books." A neighbour of Madho Singh in Gopalpura, Morena, had a wry comment: "We do not see him practising magic very much, but people all over Madhya Pradesh know that he has become a magician. Let us hope that all the existing dacoits do not become magicians, then the police will really have a difficult time finding them!"

never eats food cooked by anyone else. He does not drink, not because he has anything against liquor but because he is afraid of losing his alertness under alcohol's influence. Two sentries are always on guard about two kilometres away from where he sleeps, and they are changed every two hours. All the dacoities that they commit are done before midnight so that the gang has a clear three to four hours to make a getaway. On an average Malkhan Singh travels 40 kilometres every night, dressed in the now conventional garb of a dacoit—a police officer's uniform. Malkhan Singh, however, never misbehaves with women, nor does he allow anyone in his gang to do so—indeed, he has quite a few admirers among women.

Nor is the admiration confined to women. When we visited Malkhan Singh's village, Belao, we asked a boy where Malkhan Singh once lived. "Malkhan Singh *jo baghi ban gaye the?* (Malkhan Singh, who has become rebel?)" replied the boy. The admiration in his voice was unmistakable. Malkhan Singh's house is now deserted. His family members have left, afraid that someone might want to take revenge on Malkhan Singh by hurting them. A couple of policemen are posted there; an unimagintative administrative gesture. The walls are crumbling, and dust has gathered; shrubs have begun sprouting in corners.

We met Bhoop Singh, who stays just a couple of houses away. He eyed us with suspicion: were we policemen in plain clothes? Once he realised we were journalists, he did not stop talking. "We never had any complaints against Malkhan Singh. He mixed freely and never troubled anyone. He was also fond of singing. Had Kailash Narain not got him implicated in a case, and had not Nathuram taken a woman away from his family, he would still be here with us. We actually want him to come back to the village, we want him to surrender and lead a peaceful life."

But Malkhan Singh is not willing to surrender—not yet. Last year, the authorities tried to use the influence of ex-dacoit Mohar Singh to persuade some of the current dacoit chiefs to surrender. Mohar Singh once had a reward of Rs 2.5 lakhs on his head, and he was a feared terror. Malkhan Singh told Mohar Singh to stay away: he would only begin to think of surrendering, said Malkhan Singh, when he achieved another distinction—when the reward on his head became Rs 2.5 lakhs too. At the moment the reward is Rs 70,000—the highest for any outlaw, but still far away from Rs 2.5 lakhs. How much more time will Malkhan Singh need to get there?


DHARM VIR JAYNER

Malkhan Singh's house

A kidnap victim's tale

Ram Behari Sharma, who was kidnapped by dacoit Babu Khan and his gang, narrates his harrowing experience in captivity.

"I come from a well-to-do brahmin family. My father is a farmer and I am a B. Com. student. At around four o'clock on 30 September last year, while I was returning from Bhind town to Bathura, I came across some people in police uniform. They called me. Thinking they were policemen I went to them. Immediately they tied my hands and took me with them to the ravines at the point of a gun. There they blindfolded me. All along the way they abused me and pushed me around. Then, we stopped at a spot and they untied me. But I was not left alone. Three people were constantly guarding me, and I was kept at a distance from the rest of the gang, so that I could not hear anything that they were saying.

"All through I did not know what they were going to do with me. Occasionally I used to weep. But everytime I did so I was beaten up. After a couple of days I stopped crying. But they gave me proper food and shelter. Rarely did a night pass when we stayed at one place. We crossed from one ravine to another.

"After some time I gave up all hopes of being freed and I even thought that I would be killed. But suddenly one day I was released. It was then that I came to know what had been happening during my captivity. The dacoits had approached my father and told him that he had to pay a ransom of Rs 25,000 for my release. After that a number of meetings had taken place between my father and the dacoits. And finally, only when my father managed to collect and pay the entire amount, was I freed."

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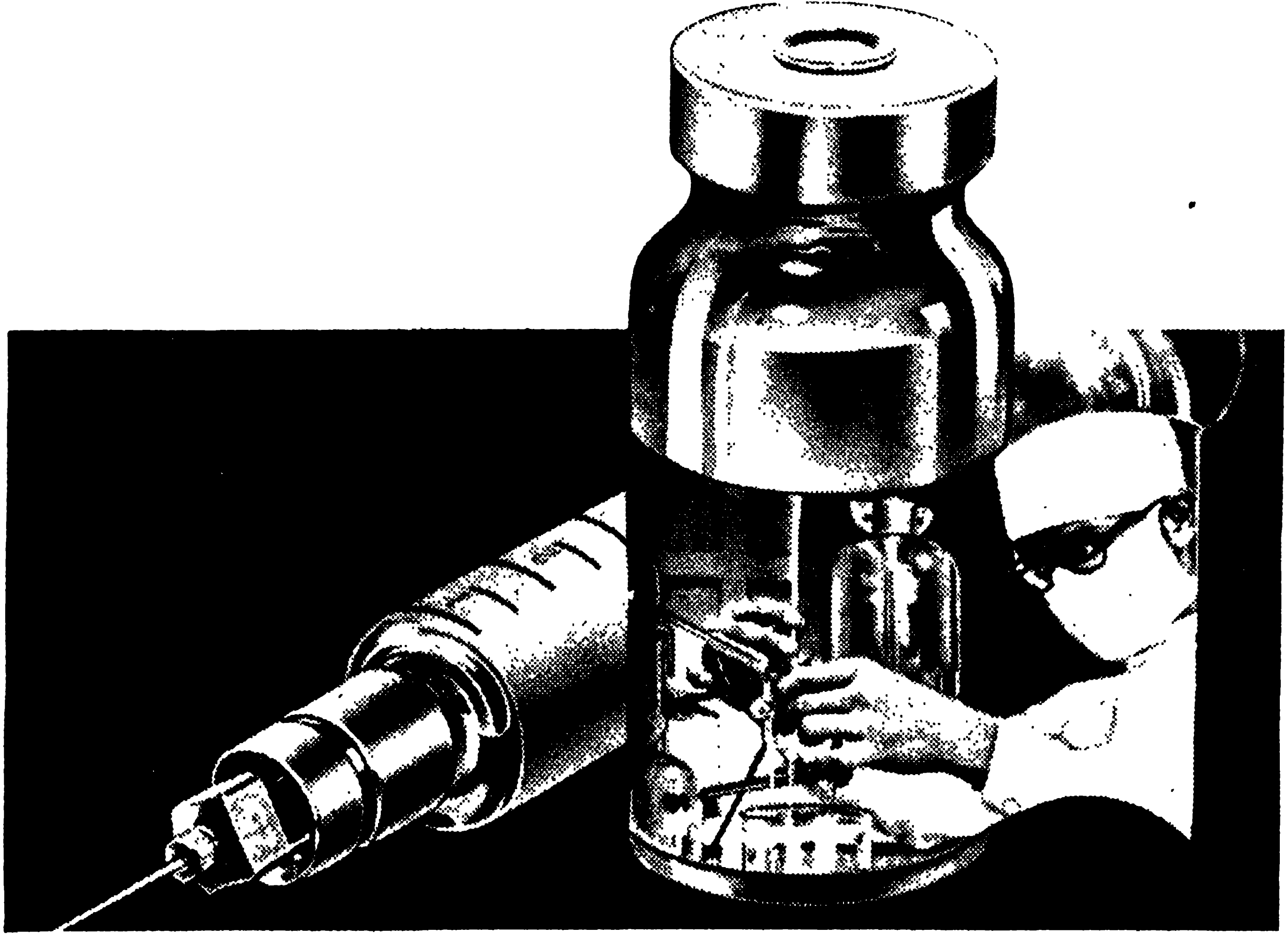

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The Strange Story of Pan Singh Tomar: From Asian Games to Chambal Ravines

Pan Singh Tomar retired as a *subedar* from the Indian army. But he achieved much more than that while serving the nation for 22 years in the army. He was a superb athlete, holding the national record in the 3,000 metre steeplechase with a timing of 8 minutes 53.4 seconds—a record broken only in 1970. Pan Singh represented India in the 1958 Tokyo Asian Games. But when he came back to his village in 1971, he found himself a victim.

No one helped him recover his land. In 1979, Pan Singh took out his gun.

SAUMITRA BANERJEE reports this unusual story of a most unusual dacoit.

FROM winning gold to looting gold. This is the strange tale of Pan Singh Tomar, a retired subedar of the Indian army and national record holder in the 3,000 metre steeplechase between 1960 and 1970. Pan Singh Tomar turned into a dacoit in 1979, eight years after he had retired after 22 years of meritorious service with the Indian army.

Born in 1932 into a poor family in Bhirausa village in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh, Pan Singh was forced to discontinue school at a very early age, and spent most of his time assisting his father Ishwar Singh, and his brother Matadin, in farming. But even as a child, Pan Singh decided that he wanted to do something other than the traditional tilling of the land. Farming, he thought, was only good enough for old age. "I have known Pan Singh since he was a child," said Ratan Singh, a village elder. "He was always active, always running around but not very interested in doing the work that his father did." But Pan Singh could do little about making his way in the big wide world—until in 1949, when he was selected to join the army, thanks to his strappling physique.

Once in the army, Pan Singh excelled in sports. In 1960 he set the national record in the 3,000 metres steeplechase with a timing of 8 minutes 53.4 seconds, and this was bettered only in 1970 by Gurmej Singh who won the bronze medal in the Asian Games by clocking 8 minutes 53.2 seconds. Pan Singh had himself worn the national colours: he participated in the Asian Games in Tokyo in 1958, though he could not win any medals. During his days as a sportsman Pan Singh was known as a tall, powerful, long-striding runner, and went abroad several times on training tours.

In 1971, Pan Singh Tomar retired from the army and returned to his village to assist his brother Matadin in the profession he had left for his old age, farming. With his return, his troubles with a rich and powerful relative, Babu Singh, began. He found, on his return, that his brother Matadin had, under pressure, sold some of the family land to Babu Singh. Land is a precious asset in a village. Pan Singh was angry, and he wanted that land back. Babu Singh, quite understandably, was in no mood to return the land: in any case, he was demanding a price which Pan Singh was not willing to pay. There was no settlement, but a very typical rural enmity was born.

According to some sources, Pan Singh began dabbling with crime much before he finally left for the ravines. Being the kind of person he was, with a very "macho" idea of himself, it is quite possible that he felt hemmed in by the quiet rural life and was attracted by the romanticism associated with dacoits. It is necessary to repeat that dacoity is not really looked upon as a heinous crime: the *baghi*(rebel) has a status that no ordinary thief or brigand could even begin to match.

What is certain is that as early as in

Sind river flows amidst ravines

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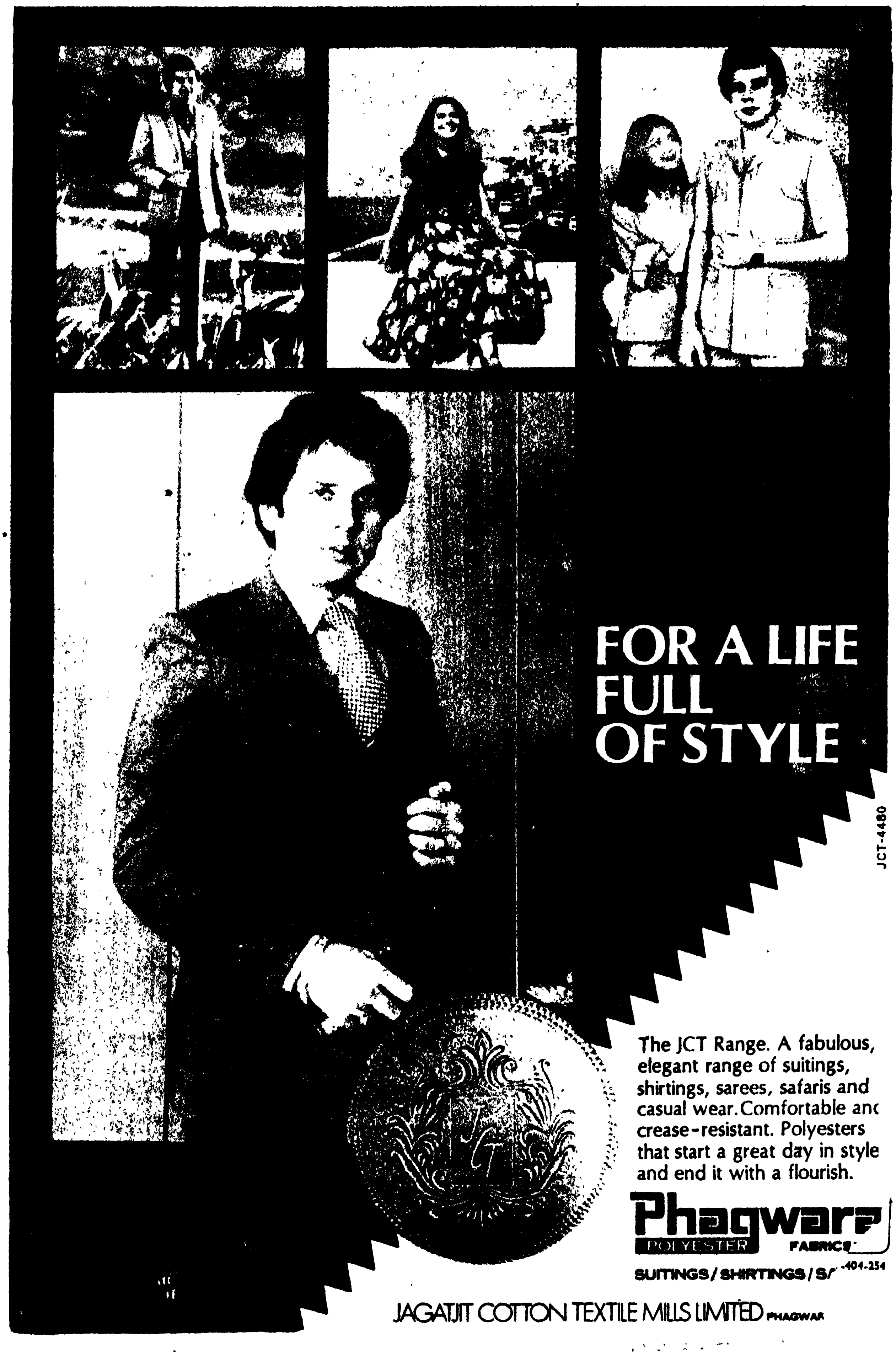
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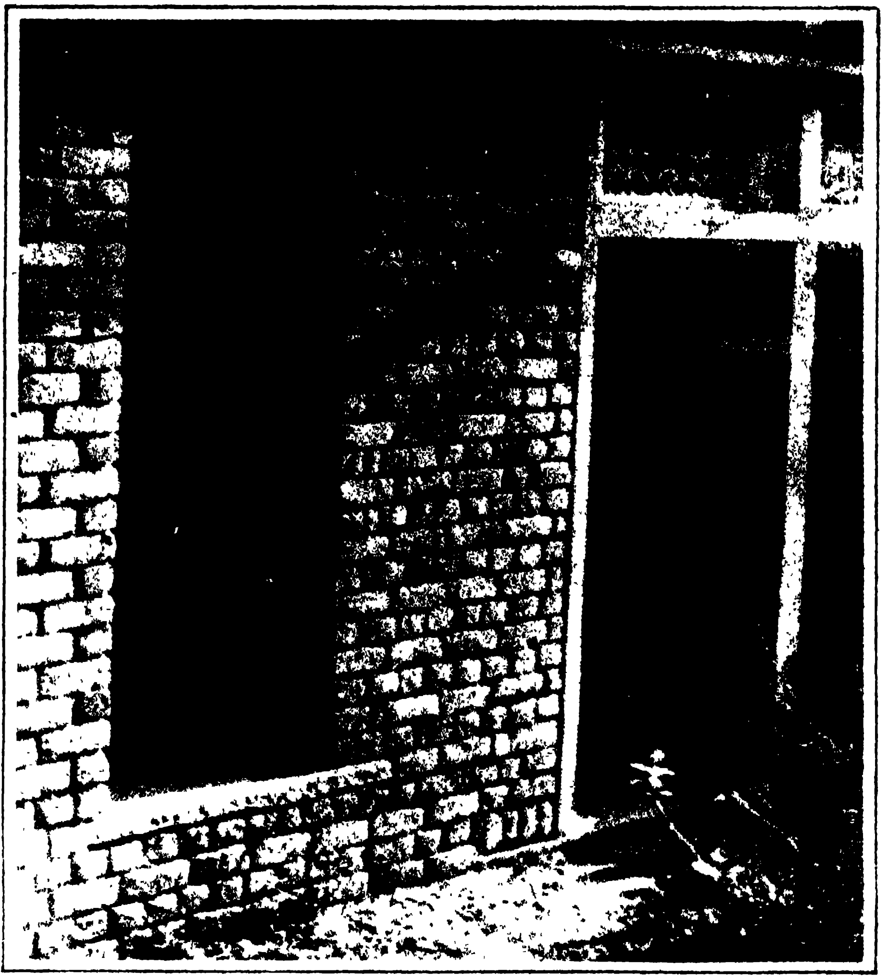
1973 Pan Singh was implicated in a case of dacoity in Diakata village in the Dholpur district of Rajasthan. According to the police, one of the gang members who had committed that dacoity was caught, and he revealed to the police that among the persons involved in the dacoity was none other than Pan Singh. The police dutifully lodged a case against him. But he was released on bail, and nothing came of it. All was well with Pan Singh Tomar till 1979, when his barely hidden anger against Babu Singh surfaced again.

It was early 1979, and the old land dispute had still not been resolved. Pan Singh had approached the authorities to intervene, but nothing had come of that either. So he went directly to Babu Singh again. Babu Singh was as adamant as before. Not merely adamant, but violent too, this time. When Pan Singh began pestering him, he collected some village toughs (this was in the first week of March), beat up Pan Singh, insulted Pan Singh's daughter and snatched away her ornaments. Pan Singh went to the police to report the matter. But even while the police were taking down the complaint, Babu Singh reached the police station. Babu Singh was an influential man of the village, and he told the police that there was no need to register Pan Singh's complaint as it was "baseless." Instead, he lodged a complaint of his own against Pan Singh! His complaint was registered by the police, and Pan Singh's ignored. Pan Singh felt helpless, no one in the village would assist him either, no villager was willing to take on Babu Singh. Pan Singh decided that he would avenge the injustice himself.

Just one day after this, Pan Singh, unable to get Babu Singh, shot dead his nephew, Jagannath Singh, in broad daylight. He then absconded to the Kuanri ravines. Accompanying him were his brother Matadin, and a faithful *dhobi* Ram Charan.

Jagannath Singh did not die; he only sustained an injury which healed. But Pan Singh had not given up; his desire for revenge was as strong as ever. In any case, the focal point of his anger was still alive. Just a couple of days after Pan Singh left for the ravines, Babu Singh was shot dead while returning home—by Pan Singh, who had been waiting in an ambush. His revenge was still not complete. Over a year later, on 20 September 1980, Babu Singh's two sons, Jarnail Singh and Havildar Singh, were working in their fields around 10.30 in the morning. Suddenly Pan Singh and Matadin appeared from behind a boulder. Before the two sons of Babu Singh had time to shout for help, Pan Singh shot the two of them dead and went away. His passion for revenge had finally been quenched. But now he would have to be a *baghi* for the rest of his life.

Today, Babu Singh's house in Bhirausa is guarded by armed policemen.



DHARAM VIR JEYNER

Pan Singh's house

The dacoits' intelligence agents

The dacoit gangs have their own well spread-out intelligence network. When this reporter reached Bhind, he was immediately spotted and word was sent back to the dacoits about both my intentions and my movements in Bhind. The main informer is the white-collar middleman who is officially law-abiding but, in fact, has made dacoity into a profitable industry for himself by becoming the link between the outlaws and society. He provides the dacoit with information about police movements, police informers (who die a cruel death if ever caught)—and which wealthy man of the area can be a potential victim. The last is particularly vital these days when kidnapping rather than just simple loot has become the main source of income for the dacoits. Indeed, it is this middleman who becomes the conduit of information and money during a kidnapping—he ensures that the money reaches the dacoit and the kidnapped person reaches home safely. The fee is on a percentage basis. It is this middleman too who supplies the dacoit gangs with provisions like food, clothing and other day-to-day requirements. Of course the profit he makes is handsome.

Besides, many of the policemen too are in league with the dacoits, betraying the force in return for cash. "It is very difficult for us sometimes to plan and capture dacoits because they have information about where we are going to raid, and by the time we reach they have got away," explains C. P. Singh, superintendent of police for Morena. Apart from the loyalty cemented by cash, there are more "honourable" loyalties—like caste, or geography, or blood between dacoits and some of their pursuers in the police.

Lastly, the fact that the dacoits camouflage themselves by the simple expedient of wearing police uniforms leads to its own problems of confusion. Often villagers and policemen themselves attack other policemen thinking them to be dacoits.

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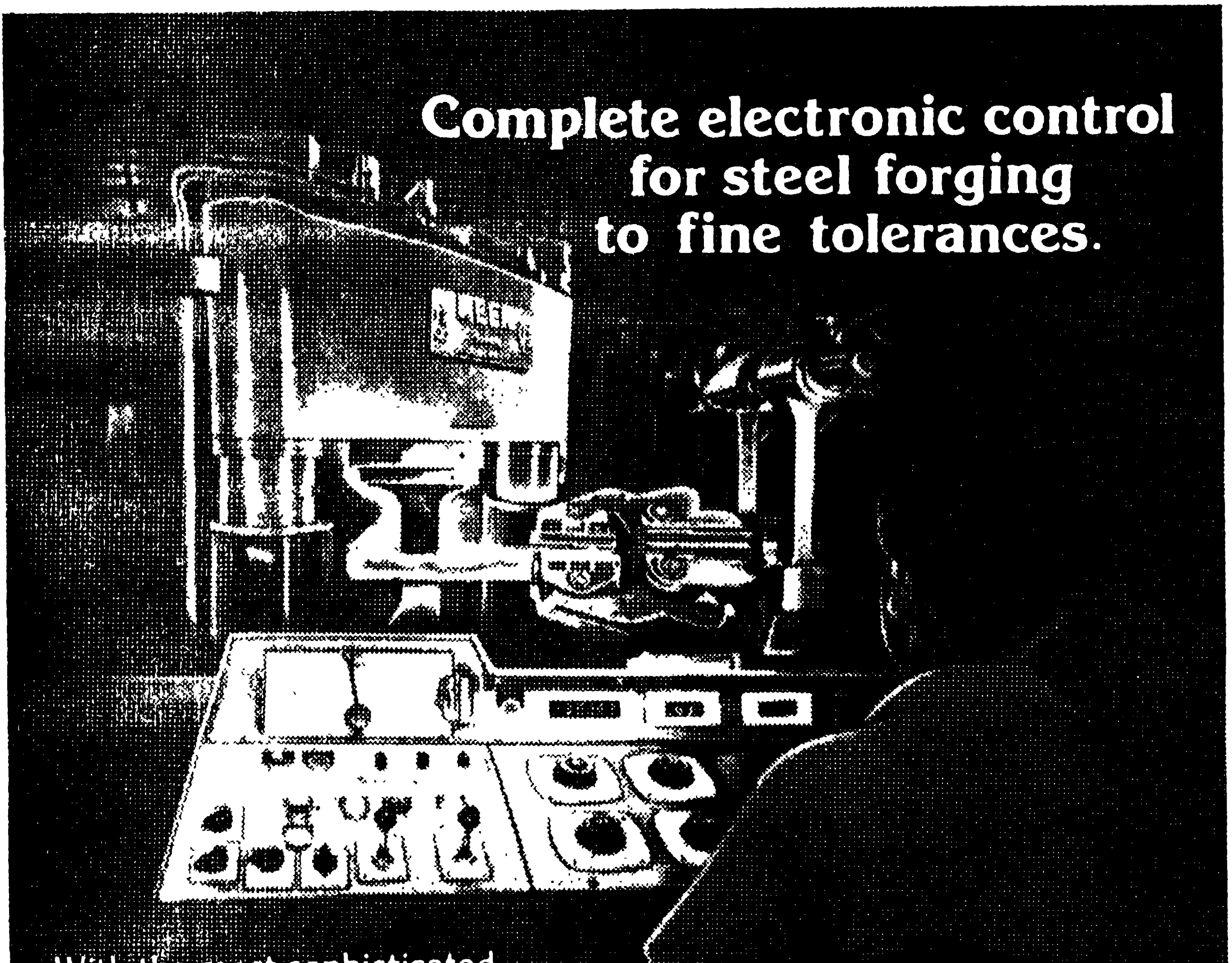

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Bhirausa itself is a very remote village and to reach it one has to travel through 20 kilometres of dirt track. For a police party to reach the village by jeep from Sihonia, the nearest police station, it takes at least one hour. But Bhirausa has now become famous, thanks to its famous son Pan Singh Tomar. Whenever we asked anyone the way to Bhirausa the stock reply was, "You want to go to Pan Singh's village?" We were travelling on our own, unaccompanied by any policeman, and the people were helpful in directing us. In the village we met Ram Swaroop, whose house is just next to Pan Singh's old house, now deserted and half-broken.

"What was Pan Singh like when he used to live here?" we asked Ram Swaroop. "He was a friendly, nice person," Ram Swaroop replied. "He was very fond of playing cards and whenever he wanted to do so he would go around telling people that they had worked hard enough for one day, and it was time to relax. And he would collect people and they would play cards till late into the night. During the day, he spent most of his time farming. Nor was he known to be a bad man. True, he was involved in a dacoity case in 1973, but after that we did not know of any case where he was involved. His trouble was really over land. I remember when Pan Singh returned to the village he had a big argument with Matadin over why he had sold the land to Babu Singh without asking him. And since then, off and on, they have had disputes with Babu Singh's family, which is a very influential family in our village. Then of course Pan Singh became a *baghi* and killed Babu Singh and his sons. But Babu Singh had harassed him a lot."

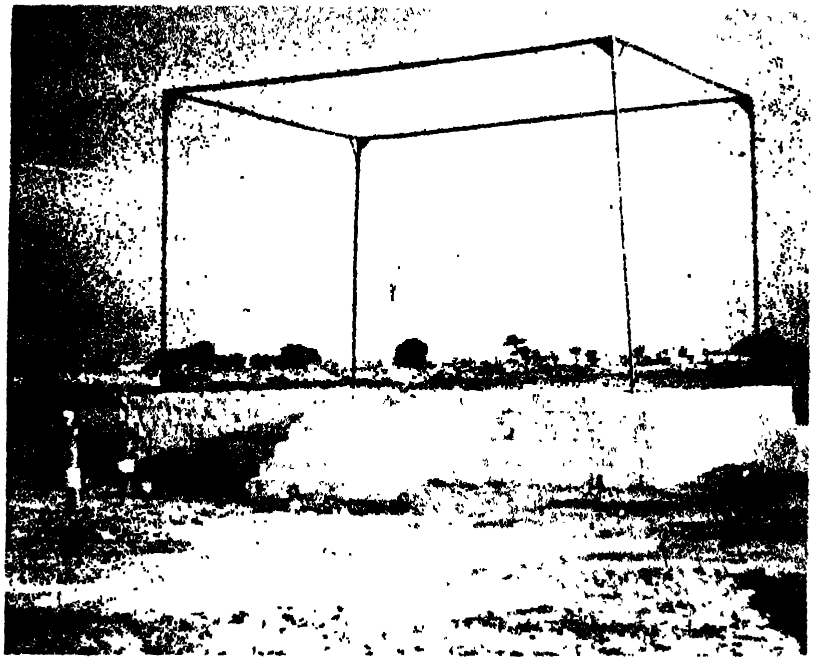
People from Babu Singh's family obviously have a different view of Pan Singh. Jagannath Singh showed us the scar on his arm which had been left behind by Pan Singh's bullet. "My uncle did not do anything wrong by refusing to part with the land. After all, he had bought the land and not snatched it. He told him to return the money and he would return the land. So why should he kill him? He should be captured by the police and punished."

That is precisely what the police has been trying to do—and nearly did in an encounter on 22 November last year. It was a joint effort by the police of Gwalior and Morena. Though the police failed to either kill or arrest Pan Singh, they did kill his brother Matadin.

This was a big blow to Pan Singh Tomar, who within a short while has managed to establish a fearsome reputation. But Pan Singh used the occasion of his brother's death to inform those who were watching that he had now not only become a confirmed dacoit, but also joined the big league. Displaying the courage that a *baghi* must show to earn the respect of his peers and enter the stories of villagers, he carried the body of his brother with him while escaping: he was determined that his brother would be given a proper funeral and his body would not reach either a police mortuary or be eaten by jackals. With the body, he crossed over from Morena district in Madhya Pradesh to Bharatpur in Rajasthan, where Matadin was duly cremated. It was there too that he formed an official alliance with another dacoit called Sarnam Singh, who operates in that area. There are certain traditional ceremonies to seal such an alliance. On 5 December Pan Singh Tomar and Sarnam Singh exchanged turbans and vowed that they would cooperate and never betray each other.

It was an important vow. The life of a *baghi* is always in demand ■

Rebels, not dacoits



Dais at Jaura where the '72 surrender took place

Banditry in this region has its roots as far back as the 12th century AD when Anangpal, a *Tomar* king of Delhi, was ousted by his now-famous cousin Prithviraj Chauhan. Anangpal took reefuge in the Chambal ravines, made it his base and from here made ceaseless efforts to reoccupy Delhi. It is here that the term *baghi* (rebel), which is what the dacoits call themselves, orginates. Anangpal's successors too tried to get to Delhi, but all such attempts were thwarted by Prithviraj Chauhan. However, with the setting up of the Sultanate and the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan, the Chauhan loyalists too went to the ravines and set up small dynastic rulerships. Anyone who passed through the region—Mohammedan, Maratha or British —was harassed. In fact, the *rajput sardars* were largely responsible for the Mughals shifting their capital from Agra to Delhi. It was fairly common for a passing imperial treasury to be attacked by the *baghis*.

With the decline of the Mughals and the annexation of Gwalior by the Marathas in the second half of the eighteenth century, lawlessness in central India increased, and the Marathas found it difficult to completely subdue the rebellious *rajputs* and *gujars*. Even during the British *raj*, though efforts were made to eliminate dacoity, none of them succeeded.

As a result, dacoity is not really considered an offence by people, but just another profession, albeit a trifle dicey one. Dacoits are by and large respected. It is precisely for this reason that the police find it difficult to capture dacoits—they do not get enough support from the local people. There is no social stigma attached to dacoity and often the social status of a person rises after he becomes a *baghi*. Violence is romanticised and made palatable—at least to those who are directly affected by it. But this is not the only reason why villagers are unwilling to come forward. The other reason is fear: it does not take the dacoits very long to find out who has ratted on them—and their punishment is brutal death.

In every walk of life a harijan has to face prejudice

Yogendra Makwana

Yogendra Makwana is the union minister of state for home affairs, and among the responsibilities specially assigned to him is harijan affairs. He is a harijan himself—and he comes from Gujarat. And the caste Hindus of Gujarat have risen against harijans, demanding that the special reservations in education given to the historically oppressed untouchables be scrapped. We spoke to him in Delhi to find out his views on the agitation.

Q: You have been accused of challenging the chief minister of Gujarat on the issue of, this agitaton. How do you react?

A: On the issue of reservation there is no difference of opinion between me and the chief minister. I have made the position very clear in both the houses of Parliament. In every democratic party there are healthy differences of opinion, but it does not mean that I am against the chief minister.

Q: Do you think that the chief minister has behaved as a good administrator in the manner in which he is tackling this situation?

A: He has tried his best to tackle the situation, but some interested political parties and individuals, who are playing their dirty game, have prolonged the agitation.

Q: Don't you think that the harijans should be militant in the face of the oppression that they have to endure?

A: I do not think that militancy will pay. Harijans are very poor and socially backward, and for ages they have been suppressed by the high caste Hindus. They have to depend for their bread on the high caste Hindus. Populationwise, they are in a minority. In Gujarat, there are hardly a few harijan houses in every village and therefore they are easily subjected to atrocities.

Q: Does this not make you angry, both as a human being and as a responsbile politician?

A: Becoming angry is not a solution. We have to find out some solution to the problem. I am trying to do that.

Q: What is your solution?

A: The main cause of their suffering is their economic inequality and poverty. Nearly 70 to 80 per cent scheduled castes are living below the poverty line: they have to be lifted above it. It is for this that our government has started a new scheme of special central assistance to the states for scheduled caste development. It is for the first time in the history of this nation that a special component plan meant for the economic upliftment of the scheduled castes has been drafted. Under this plan, many schemes for economic welfare of these communities will be taken up and it is our endeavour to bring at least 50 per cent of the total population of scheduled castes, which is about two crores families, above the poverty line during the sixth five-year plan.

Q: You said this was the first time: do you mean to say that nothing was done in the past, in the times of Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Mrs Gandhi?

A: You have not understood me. In fact, this scheme has been evolved only because of Mrs Gandhi. It is because of her initiative and interest that it took shape. There were a lot of difficulties in the initial stages. The finance ministry and the planning commission had their doubts about the viability of this scheme, but it was Mrs Gandhi who got the cabinet clearance.

Q: Are your wife and your daughter playing a very important part in helping the harijans today in Gujarat?

A: My wife is an MLA. My daughters are still studying, and they have not entered politics, nor is there any intention on their part to enter politics.

Q: Your state government has obviously failed to stop this agitation.

A: It is not the government who can alone stop this agitation, and stop the atrocities on harijans. Unless all the people of Gujarat become involved in (stopping it) it won't stop, because it has assumed a great dimension and spread to the villages also. All the social workers and leaders of society, irrespective of their party allegiance, should come forward and stop it. The role of the government should not be seen in isolation, particularly on this issue. It is ultimately for the entire society to do justice to the weaker sections. In Gujarat, there are many leaders who claim to be Gandhian. They should come forward and help the government in this task.

Q: Why do you think that this agitation started so suddenly?

A: It started with a limited demand: the demand for abolition of the system of "carrying forward" an interchangeability of reserved seats in the post-graduate medical courses. This demand was made by the medical students, but after some time some political parties took undue interest in it, and encouraged the agitation, even giving financial assistance.

Q: Who are these parties?

A. I have already named them. The leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party at the national level have supported reservation and expressed their displeasure towards the agitation. But at the same time, their MLA from Gujarat, Mr Ashok Bhatt has supported this agitation. Their MLA from Baroda, Mr Makrand Desai, when asked, did not clarify his position on this issue. The Lok Dal leader, Mr Chimanbhai Patel, also openly supported the agitation in the initial stages. But now he is not suppporting it.

Q: What kind of psychological impact will this agitation leave in the minds of people?

A: I agree with you that it could leave scars on human minds. But it is a social problem and all of us have to ponder over it. The values established by Bapuji have been forgotten by the people of this country and we have to do something to remind them.

Q: Have they also been forgotten by the politicians of the country?

A: I will not say "all." But some, of course.

Q: Has Gujarat forgotten Gandhiji?

A: I will not put it quite like that. But I would like to put it in a different way. The influence of caste has come to the fore all over the country, and it has its impact in Gujarat also.

Q: What do you think is an answer to the harijan problem? I don't think just a component plan is a complete answer.

A: You are right. Only economic welfare is not the answer. We have to educate them and create an atmosphere in the country where people treat them equally in social life also.

Q: Have you faced any prejudices in your life?

A: Oh! Many a time. I was not allowed to enter school in my primary days. I had my primary education in a hut in a harijan locality. My teachers were also harijans

Q: Have you faced any prejudice in your political life?

A: In every walk of life, a harijan has to face prejudice. At the same time, one has to be brave enough to overcome it. I have done it.

Q: One of the things that people told us in Gujarat was that the political caste plank of your party in the assembly, panchayat and corporation elections has been KHAM and that is one of the the reasons why the patels, brahamins, etc. are annoyed with your government. Therefore, they utilised this opportunity provided by the medicos. How do you react?

A: My party is wedded to the cause of all the downtrodden and the depressed people of the country. Some of the leaders ,in Gujarat during their discussions, use the word KHAM to denote a combination of kshatriya, harijan, adivasi and minorities, since these sections have been the main supporters of the Congress Party from the beginning. In a lighter vein, they refer to our party as comprising of KHAM. But there was no conscious effort on our part to make an exclusive group of these communities. At the same time, it is a fact that the harijans have wholeheartedly supported the Congress Party in all the elections. The upper castes, particularly those who are opposing the Congress, were annoyed by this. The return of Mrs Gandhi to power has not yet been digested by them Whatever we have achieved they wanted to undo.

Q· 118 out of 140 MLAs of the Congress Party belong to the KHAM communities. But there is no harijan representative in the Gujarat cabinet. There are ony two junior ministers.

A: Yes, there is no harijan in the cabinet. There is one deputy minister and one minister of state. The harijans did demand a cabinet minister. But, at the same time, they never tried to demand it through agitation. It was within the party framework and party forums that they demanded it. The high caste Hindus have no reason to be angry, because there is no harijan in the cabinet.

Q: The medicos demand was the demand of a very small section of the society. How did it spread?

A: It shows the strength of casteist elements in our society. They took advantage of the situation and tried to settle their accounts.

Q: Law and order is a state subject, but protection of harijans is a central subject as well, and so, can you not interfere and order an inquiry into this?

A: I brought this to the notice of the state government and they promptly reacted. The state government promised to engage not only the best advocate but also to consider sympathetically the demands made by the harijan leaders in connection with this case. I am fully satisfied by the action taken by the state government in so far as this case is concerned.

Anuradha Makwana

What it means to be a harijan in Gujarat—even for a central minister's daughter

Shantabehn is the wife of Mr Yogendra Makwana, minister of state for home affairs at the centre with special charge of harijan affairs among other things. Her husband may be a central minister now, but Shantabehn was an MLA in 1962, long before her husband entered the political fray. The agitation by caste Hindu Gujaratis against reservation for harijans brought Shantabehn,who is a harijan as is her husband, into the limelight. She refused to be cowed down, and played a leading role in keeping harijan morale and courage up during attack. And during the agitation another name was heard in Ahmedabad—that of Anuradha Makwana, their 20-year-old daughter. We went to talk to them, not so much to find out what they did during the agitation, though that of course inevitably came in, but more to learn what it feels like to be a harijan, even a privileged harijan, in modern and officially liberated India. This, in particular, was what we really wanted to know from Anuradha, who was born a decade after the Indian constitution was adopted.

Q: How did Gujarat, the home state of Mahatma Gandhi, get embroiled in a casteist agitation like this? How did the upper castes start this suddenly?

Shantabehn: This could not have started suddenly; some amount of planning must have been done. I can't say what planning was done, but a movement of this sort could not have started all of a sudden.

Q: Who did the planning?

Shantabehn: Had we known, wouldn't the government have nabbed them?

Q: Anuradha, you are studying in a college, you are young; in your opinion, what is the condition of your community in our country today? We are not talking simply in terms of the agitation; we are talking to you as a young woman from your community, who is alert, who reacts to what happens around. Do you feel discriminated against?

Anuradha: Some benefits have come to those harijans who live in the town. But their number is microscopic. When I accompany my mother to her constituency, or when I go with my father, I see the small villages and the condition of the poor harijans in those villages. There are a higher number of educated people in Gujarat than in the other states, but even then there are so many downtrodden people in our state: it is shocking!

Q: So what do you think should be done?

Anuradha: To begin with, harijans must be educated. Facilities for education must be given to them...

Q: But has that facility not been given to them already? Our policies have been providing for such things for so many years...

Anuradha: Yes, the policies have been there, but have they been accepted by society?

Q: So what should be done?

Anuradha: My family is so advanced, even then in my schooldays I had to often sit separately. The brahmin and the upper caste girls used to shun me. When *I* have experienced such discrimination, when staying in a town and belonging to a family which is advanced, then you can well imagine the condition of the harijans living in villages and belonging to poor families.

Q: Don't you feel angry and provoked?

Anuradha: Sometimes I feel extremely annoyed. But then I think that when this has been the system for thousands of years, it is bound to take some time to disappear. What can I

Anuradha: When I was studying in class six, my father got me admission to a leading girls' school in Ahmedabad... During the recess I went to drink water, and the other girls told me that as I was a harijan, I should not drink water from the same place as them. I was shocked... When I returned to the classroom I was weeping... On hearing I was a harijan the teacher turned to me and said, "What is there to weep about?"
This was my first experience in school. Won't you feel bad if you are stopped from even drinking water?

gain by getting annoyed?

Q: What do you intend to do to correct the system? If someone discriminated against me on such grounds I *would get very angry*

Anuradha: We are outnumbered. What can we do? If in a class of 50 students, there are four of five harijan students, what can they do? Even if we go for a confrontation, what do we stand to gain?

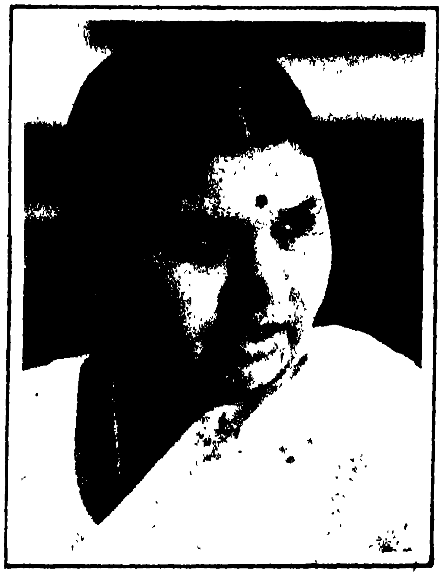
Q: Harijans constitute a very significant percentage of our population, a percentage that can tilt election results one way or the other. Laws are certainly made in their favour, but how many are fulfilled?

Shantabehn: Let me reply to this question. To begin with, harijans should get proper facilities and help for getting education at least upto school level Harijans have benefited from the government's policies; it is wrong to say that no benefits have accrued to them all these years. Take the case of my husband. His father was an inspector of schools. Mr Makwana had to work on the land till he passed his matriculation. He also had to work while he did his higher studies. In the poor rural families, the children have to start working from the age of eight or earlier. Normally, the eldest child is entrusted with the job of looking after the other children, so there is little chance of him or her going to school even if the parents want to send him or her. That is the meaning of poverty. Parents cannot even provide food to the children, despite wanting to—what to talk of sending them to school. But even then some people do manage to study and come up, to get educated and get a job, perhaps of a clerk. But even after becoming a clerk a person has to look after his whole family, so he can't really get emancipated.

Q: What do you think will be the long-term effect of this movement in Gujarat?

Shantabehn: I think the movement has (once again) made the harijans realise what their situation is, under what conditions they live even today. The scheduled castes, cutting across party lines, have realised that unless they work for their welfare, nothing will happen. The government has given many facilities, but the gains, though little, have become an eyesore for the upper castes Those people have orthodox ideas; they do not want to see our upliftment.

Anuradha (interrupting): Why only orthodox people? Even those who are educated and modern cannot tolerate us. A friend of my father, an America educated doctor, who comes to our home so often, got his son admitted to a medical college on a donation seat, as he did not have good marks. Now this boy stands up during the agitation and says, "What is the need for harijans' sons to become doctors? Are we not there?" Now tell me, if a boy from a family like this, educated, who has been around the world, holds such feelings, what can you expect the uneducated upper caste people to be?



Shantabehn Makwana

Q: Can you, Anuradha, tell us something about your own experiences at school, in your college...?

Anuradha: When I was studying in class six, my father got me admission to a leading girls' school in Ahmedabad. I did not know that I should not disclose my caste to the upper caste girls. When some people asked me, I told them that I was a harijan. During the recess I went to drink water, and the other girls told me that as I was a harijan, I should not drink water from the same place as them. I was shocked. This was in Ahmedabad; that too in a leading school. So imagine the condition in other places!

When I returned to the classrom (it was a mathematics class) after the recess, I was weeping. My teacher asked me why I was weeping. I told her that I had been scolded by the other girls when I had gone to drink water. The teacher enquired from the other girls why they had objected to my drinking water. They told her, "You don't know? She is a harijan." On hearing this the teacher turned to me and said, "What wrong have they done? What is there to weep about?" This was my first experience in school. Later when I mentioned this incident to my father, he told me I should not heed what the upper caste girls had said, and should simply forcibly drink water despite their objections. After that I started doing that. But that was my first experience. Won't you feel bad if you are stopped from even drinking water?

Q: For how long will such things go on?

Shantabehn: You should put this question to society.

Anuradha: But this mentality has also undergone some change. The same girl who stopped me from drinking water now frequents my home. Her father often comes to call on my father and recently he came with the request that my father should help his son get admission. She even eats in my home! But I tell you, whatever the upper castes may do (when being liberal), always at the back of their minds they know that we are harijans, untouchables. Once a friend came to my house and said, "Seeing your house, it does not seem that you are harijans."

Q: Anuradha, how many boys and girls of your generation read about or care to think about Gandhiji? Do they consider him to be relevant?

Anuradha: There is a sort of despair in our generation. Most of my friends do not read books at all, leave aside Gandhiji. In my college, I do not have too many friends: what can you talk to them about? They either talk about films, or dresses... They don't have any time for serious matters. There is a kind of despair.

Shantabehn: Even the staunchest followers of Gandhiji in Gujarat are keeping quiet today. They should openly come out and say whether they are for or against reservations. Even Morarji Desai, who proclaims himself to be a great Gandhian, does not have the courage to open his mouth. So why talk of the younger generation...

Q: Don't you think that even after the agitation is over, the government might quietly surrender to the demands of the agitators?

A: How can they? The protection to harijans is given by the constitution. Mrs Gandhi's sympathies are with us. So how can they surrender to the agitators?

Q: Why are there only two harijans in the Solanki ministry, and why were even these two not consulted before the carry-forward and interchangeability schemes were scrapped?

Shantabehn: The health minister must have consulted the chief minister.

Q: But why did he not take his harijan colleagues into confidence?

A: The CM himself may have taken the decision. I do not want to comment on personalities. Yes, the two ministers are saying they were not taken into confidence. But I don't want to comment. ■

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March.
Brief season.

Soft blue skies. Gentle breeze.
The sun is kind. Spring has
sprung...

Joy comes in many colours.
Gulmohurs greening. Roses in the
pink. Easter eggs. Holi makes
a splash.

Keep a date with the dawn. Early
morning walks are pure pleasure.
All around the evidence of
renewal. Gardens bathed in new
dew. Ideas blossom.
Happiness hastens...

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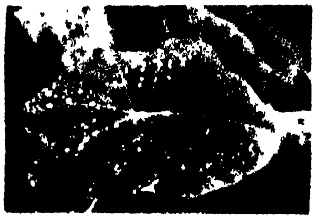
fabrics with the right spirit.
Perhaps the blue of sky and
the white of cloud...spring a
surprise.



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The bearer bonds are barren

By SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY

ON 2 February 1981, the President of India promulgated the first ordinance of the year (and in keeping with Indira Gandhi's preference—while the nation was asleep) titled "The Special Bearer Bonds Ordinance, 1981". Since then, howls of protest have been heard from every corner of the country regarding this ordinance.

No one has to date understood the *timing*, the *need* or the *worth* of the proposals contained in the ordinance. Parliament was to meet just two weeks later and no one was convinced with the paragraph in the ordinance which said: "Whereas Parliament is not in session and the President is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it *necessary for him* to take *immediate* action..."

What was the immediacy? In 1978 during the Janata regime, an ordinance was issued demonetising 1000-rupee notes. That step achieved nothing.

Nor have any of the other steps to flush out black money. Since 1936, the government of India has been drawing up schemes to end black money. Up to independence the emphasis was on tightening up the tax machinery. After 1947, we have tried out the "seduction" schemes, abandoning the earlier punitive approach. But all the seduction schemes have lacked the necessary sex appeal, and so have failed to produce any results.

In 1951, a Voluntary Disclosure Scheme (VDS) was introduced. "All is forgiven" was the motto of this scheme, but not more than Rs 70 crores in income was disclosed, and a mere Rs 11 crores collected as taxes. Obviously many were not interested in being forgiven. Later in 1965, in the context of the patriotic fervour of the 1962-66 period, another VDS was introduced with a "now or never" slogan. But black money spinners were unrepentant. Only Rs 198 crores was realised and Rs 59 crores paid as taxes. In real terms, the performance was worse than in 1951.

In 1975, under the *Kadi irada* (iron will) Emergency rule, yet another VDS made the scene. This time things would be different, we were told, because the opposition was in jail, and Mrs Gandhi and her sibling Sanjay Gandhi meant business. But so did the black money *wallahs*. Although about Rs 14,000 crores in black money was circulating in the economy, only Rs 741 crores was disclosed, and a mere Rs 241 crores collected as taxes. About 49 per cent of the assessed persons were ladies and minors who had never been assessed before! So much for *Kadi irada*.

When the Janata party came to power, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was constituted by the new Lok Sabha under P. V. Narasimha Rao (it is the convention for a nominee of the largest opposition party to become the PAC chairman). One of the members of this powerful MPs' committee was Vasant Sathe. Both these gentlemen are now cabinet ministers, and were present when the Indira cabinet drafted the "Special Bearer Bond Ordinance" for the President's signature. Neither of them even squeaked in the cabinet meeting but as chairman and member of the PAC, they had roared and thundered on the VDSs. Their golden "voluntarily disclosed thoughts" are contained in the 123rd report of the PAC, now a public document, in which they declared all past VDSs as "frauds" and said that no government should try the VDSs in future! But their recommendations have been thrown to the winds.

The present "Special Bearer Bonds" scheme however will also flop as the previous others did. Whereas the previous VDSs have had the real *and* stated objectives of flushing out black money, I learn that the real objectives of the current bearer bonds scheme are not really that, despite the stated objective being to "canalize for productive purpose the black money." Since the ordinance was promulgated only Rs 15 crores of black money was disclosed, of which Rs 8 crores is from Delhi! In all previous VDSs the principal "donor" has been Bombay. Why Delhi this time? Thereby hangs a tale!

When these bonds were floated, officials of the finance minister said that Rs 1,400 crores would be netted as "disclosed" income. With black money being generated at the rate of Rs 20,000 crores annually, this is a defeat before the battle. But then the real aim of the bonds is not black money in the country.

Another aspect of the bonds is that a single bond will cost Rs 10,000 which is transferable like a promissory note, and after ten years it is encashable as Rs 12,000, i.e., earning a compound rate of interest of 1. 8 per cent. Ordinary bonds fetch 10 per cent interest, and informal black money loans fetch 20-35 per cent return. Therefore, why would anyone in his senses go in for these bonds? The only circumstance is when the alternative to not purchasing these bonds is a high probability of detection and a punitive sentence under the law. Is there any such danger? I made enquiries in Bombay, and the *satta wallahs* told me that the probability of detection of black money in India is just 0.02 (i.e., 2 in a 100!).

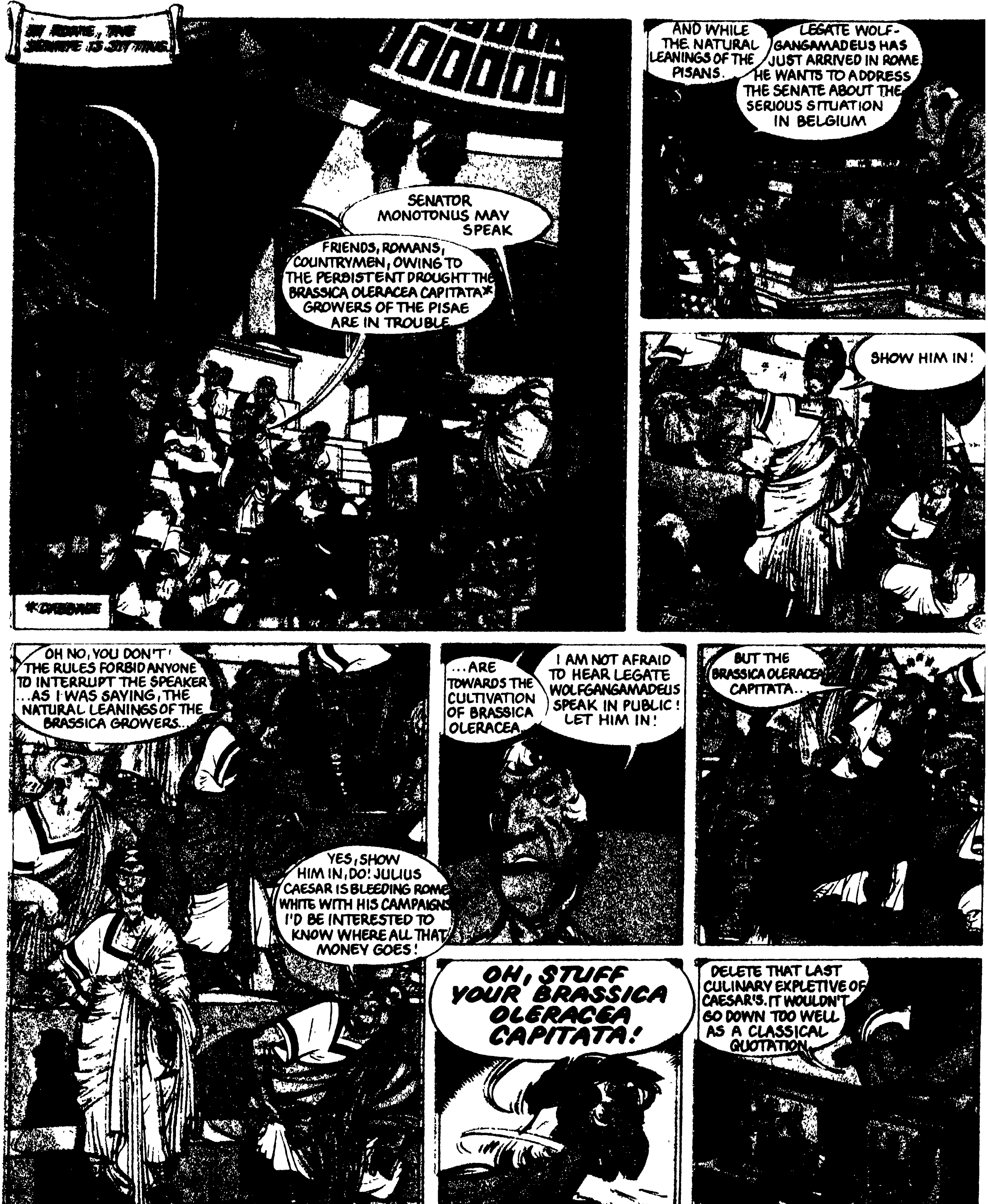
Putting the question in another way, we can determine the probability of detection that should obtain before anyone is "persuaded" to buy the bonds. Assuming that upon detection, 100 per cent of the detected income is confiscated, a black money operator has two alternatives: 1) he buys the bearer bonds meekly and earns 1.8 per cent or 2) he risks lending the black money at 20 per cent interest. On the basis of these two alternatives, it is easy mathematics to prove that unless the probability of being caught is more than .70 (i.e., 7 in 10), it will always be more profitable to risk keeping the black money without disclosing it. In other words, no VDS can work unless it is backed by severe tightening of the tax machinery by which the risk of being caught becomes sufficiently high.

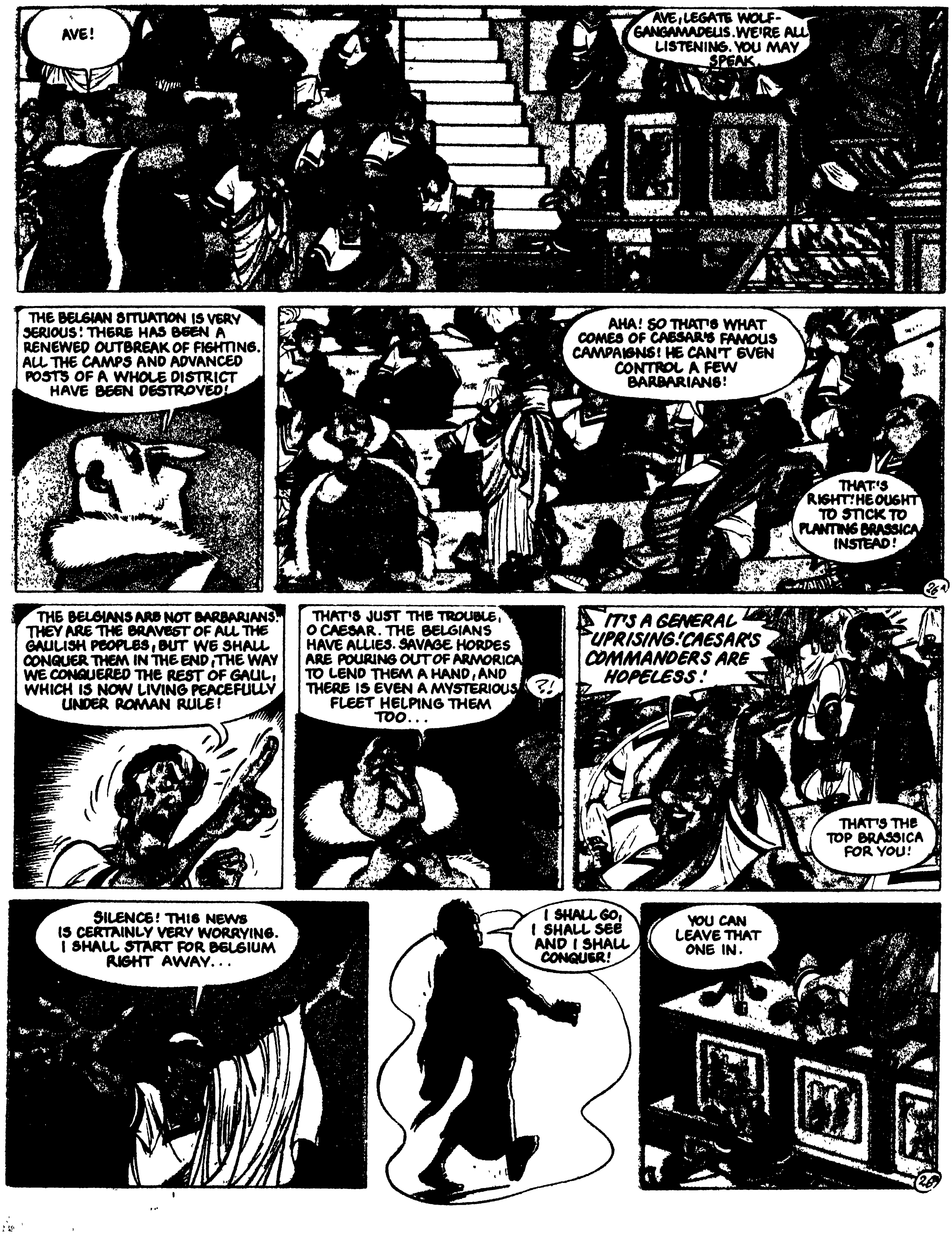
On the contrary, the probability of detection is lower today than ever before. The reason for it is the 1968 ban on company donations to political parties. Most political parties today receive donations in the form of black money. The giver and the taker both know it, and like it too! With political patronage, can any black money spinner be afraid? Black money can only be eliminated by declogging our tax and legal system. The ban on company donations should be scrapped, and political parties should have their accounts audited. The recommendations of the Choksi, L. K. Jha and Vadilal Dgali committees should be implemented.

But the "Special Bearer Bonds" are not meant to even mop up the split suds. It is a logical conclusion to the search for the keys and the digital watch. This is the age of recycling. Even the prince's treasury needs laundering, especially when he is no more.

ASTERIX IN BELGIUM

by GOSCINNY
and UDERZO


IN ROME, THE SENATE IS SITTING.
SENATOR MONOTONUS MAY SPEAK
FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN, OWING TO THE PERSISTENT DROUGHT THE BRASSICA OLERACEA CAPITATA* GROWERS OF THE PISAE ARE IN TROUBLE
*CABBAGE
AND WHILE THE NATURAL LEANINGS OF THE PISANS.
LEGATE WOLFGANGAMADEUS HAS JUST ARRIVED IN ROME. HE WANTS TO ADDRESS THE SENATE ABOUT THE SERIOUS SITUATION IN BELGIUM
SHOW HIM IN!
OH NO, YOU DON'T! THE RULES FORBID ANYONE TO INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER ...AS I WAS SAYING, THE NATURAL LEANINGS OF THE BRASSICA GROWERS...
YES, SHOW HIM IN, DO! JULIUS CAESAR IS BLEEDING ROME WHITE WITH HIS CAMPAIGNS I'D BE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHERE ALL THAT MONEY GOES!
...ARE TOWARDS THE CULTIVATION OF BRASSICA OLERACEA
I AM NOT AFRAID TO HEAR LEGATE WOLFGANGAMADEUS SPEAK IN PUBLIC! LET HIM IN!
BUT THE BRASSICA OLERACEA CAPITATA...
OH, STUFF YOUR BRASSICA OLERACEA CAPITATA!
DELETE THAT LAST CULINARY EXPLETIVE OF CAESAR'S. IT WOULDN'T GO DOWN TOO WELL AS A CLASSICAL QUOTATION


AVE!
AVE, LEGATE WOLFGANGAMADEUS. WE'RE ALL LISTENING. YOU MAY SPEAK.
THE BELGIAN SITUATION IS VERY SERIOUS! THERE HAS BEEN A RENEWED OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING. ALL THE CAMPS AND ADVANCED POSTS OF A WHOLE DISTRICT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED!
AHA! SO THAT'S WHAT COMES OF CAESAR'S FAMOUS CAMPAIGNS! HE CAN'T EVEN CONTROL A FEW BARBARIANS!
THAT'S RIGHT! HE OUGHT TO STICK TO PLANTING BRASSICA INSTEAD!
26
THE BELGIANS ARE NOT BARBARIANS. THEY ARE THE BRAVEST OF ALL THE GAULISH PEOPLES, BUT WE SHALL CONQUER THEM IN THE END, THE WAY WE CONQUERED THE REST OF GAUL, WHICH IS NOW LIVING PEACEFULLY UNDER ROMAN RULE!
THAT'S JUST THE TROUBLE, O CAESAR. THE BELGIANS HAVE ALLIES. SAVAGE HORDES ARE POURING OUT OF ARMORICA TO LEND THEM A HAND, AND THERE IS EVEN A MYSTERIOUS FLEET HELPING THEM TOO...
?!
IT'S A GENERAL UPRISING! CAESAR'S COMMANDERS ARE HOPELESS!
THAT'S THE TOP BRASSICA FOR YOU!
SILENCE! THIS NEWS IS CERTAINLY VERY WORRYING. I SHALL START FOR BELGIUM RIGHT AWAY...
I SHALL GO, I SHALL SEE AND I SHALL CONQUER!
YOU CAN LEAVE THAT ONE IN.
26

EXCLUSIVE! FROM 'THE FIFTH HORSEMAN'

BOMB UNDER NEW YORK

The US President sits in secret conclave with his top advisers. The danger of a nuclear holocaust stares them in the face. If Isreal is not made to withdraw to the pre 1967-war boundaries in 36 hours, then the thermonuclear blast of a three-megaton hydrogen bomb will destroy New York city. It is not a hoax; it is certainly not an ordinary threat; the threat has come from the Libyan leader Col. Kadhafi. This is the scenario for the dramatic new political novel *The Fifth Horseman* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, whose journalistic research into the past has won them so many laurels. The authors of *Freedom at Midnight* now use real-life people and situations to depict what could well happen. The book is published by Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd and is priced at Rs 60, and we bring our readers the first of two exciting extracts.

Shortly after noon, Sunday December 13, an attractive blonde in a polo coat appeared at the Madison Gate of the White House with a bulky manila envelope addressed to the President of the United States.

Then, while the Executive Protection Service sergeant manning the gate was logging in the envelope and passing it through his scanner, she disappeared down Pennsylvania Avenue.

The package was taken to the National Security Council duty officer. It contained a 30-minute BASF tape in Arabic and a complex set of drawings.

The duty officer summoned a State Department Arabist to the White House to translate the tape.

The speaker on it claimed to be Muammar Kadhafi. He had, he said, gained access "to the ultimate weapon on earth."

He had hidden it on Manhattan Island and would, he warned, detonate it in 36 hours if before that time the United States had not forced Israel to withdraw all its settlements from the West Bank of the Jordan, returned East Jeruslam to Arab rule and agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the Arab territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war.

And he warned further, he would detonate it instantly if any attempt was made to evacuate the city.

The duty officer alerted Jack Eastman, the air force major general who had replaced Zbigniew Brezinski as the National Security Adviser. Eastman initiated a well-rehearsed U.S. response to such threats of nuclear blackmail.

The envelope was hand-carried to the Nuclear Emergency desk of the FBI headquarters a few blocks from the White House; the blue prints were sent to the Department of Energy's Germantown, Maryland headquarters for study; and Eastman ordered the CIA to run a voice analysis of the tape. It was inconclusive. The handful of student revolutionaries at Libya's Washington Embassy refused to comment.

By late afternoon, Eastman had just about concluded that the threat, like the 50-odd similar threats that had been made in the U.S. during the 70's was a hoax. Or, at the outside, a menace from a group of Palestinians masquerading behind Kadhafi's name.

He was ready to leave his office when the Department of Energy called. The blueprint, Eastman was told, had been sent to Los Alamos by facsimile machine for a detailed analysis. It appeared to be a real nuclear weapons design.

With that the National Security Adviser decided to convene a crisis committee meeting in the White House at eight o'clock. Then he left for the living quarters to inform the President.

At precisely eight o'clock, the President entered the National Security Council conference room in the West-wing of the White House. The men and women in the room rose the instant his familiar figure appeared in the doorway.

He motioned to them to sit, while he remained standing, biting his lower lip as he often did when he was trying to concentrate, appearing in his faded jeans, his rumpled cardigan, even smaller, more vulnerable than usual.

"I want to thank you all for being here tonight," he said in that soft, almost apologetic tone of his," and ask you to pray with me that what's brought us here is just a hoax because..." his voice trailed off "...because if it's not, we've got a long, long night ahead of us."

He took his place in one of the inexpensive chairs upholstered in red rust fabric ringing the oval conference table.

The room was as unprepossessing, as unimaginative a place as the boardroom of a medium-sized Middle Eastern manufacturer of cardboard containers. Yet it was here that the thermo-nuclear Armageddon had been envisaged during the Cuban missile crisis; that the decisions which sent half-a-million Americans to fight and die in Vietnam had been debated.

Its banal appearance was deceptive. At the touch of a button, a massive screen came down from one wall. Another button swept aside a set of curtains to reveal an electronic mapboard. Beside each seat was a drawer containing a secure .ed telephone.

Most important were the facilities of the White House Communications Centre just beyond. There, banks of communications consoles with television-like screens linked the room and the White House to every vital nerve centre of the U.S. Government; the Pentagon, the CIA, State, the National Security Agency, the Strategic Air Command. NORAD's National Command Centre, in Colorado Springs.

The President turned first to a lean, bald man in a Harris tweed jacket and grey flannels sucking a pipe. Gardiner "Tap" Bennington, the heir to a Massachusetts textile fortune, had replaced Stansfield Turner as the head of the CIA six months earlier.

"Do we have any intelligence to indicate a Palestinian terrorist group might be ready to try something like this, Tap?" he asked.

"Not really, sir. It's something they've talked about for years. But it's always sounded more like hashish talk to us than anything else. We did have one report in the Intelligence community in 1978 that a bunch of them were being trained by the Libyans to pull an armed raid on a nuclear power plant. Hijack it so to speak. But we were never able to confirm it."

"How about Kadhafi?" the President queried. "Would he have the capacity to do something like this?"

Bennington struck a match and noisily lit his pipe, a ploy he'd learned from his second boss, Allan Dulles, who used it to get time to marshall his thoughts. Then he picked up a file stamped "Top Secret" from the table in front of him. "We've been keeping a close eye on him and he's done a number of things that concern us very much."

Swiftly, he ticked them off:

1972 : Kadhafi tries to buy a nuclear reactor from the U.S. The Government halts the sale.

1973 : The Libyan arranges to buy an experimental reactor and highly enriched uranium in San Diego. Kissinger kills the project.

1975 : Kadhafi secretly agrees to finance Pakistan's quest for an "Islamic Bomb".

1976 : (January) The CIA discovers Kadhafi trying to bribe European scientists to work on a nuclear weapons programme.

1976 : (February) Jacques Chirac agrees France will sell Libya a 600-megawatt nuclear reactor.

1976 : (December) Kadhafi offers Gianni Agnelli virtually unlimited financing to involve FIAT in nuclear weapons research.

1978 : Libyan spokesman tells a U.S. scientific delegation "Libya is determined to get atomic arms."

1979 : CIA confirms Libyan-Pakistani atomic link.

> ***A quick nervous gasp in the distant scientist's voice was audible to each of the men and women in the White House basement. "The blueprint is for a thermo-nuclear device. Mr President, a three megaton hydrogen bomb... It would mean, Sir, that, for all practical purposes, New York City would be wiped off the face of the earth."***

The President interrupted. "Okay, Tap, where is he right now? Can he or can he not make a bomb?"

Bennington leaned back in his chair. "In our judgment, he's at least five years away from it. He still has only one source of potential fissile material on Libyan soil and that's that light-water reactor the French has just set up for him."

"Could Kadhafi have gotten the plutonium he'd needed to make nuclear weapons out of the reactor if he cheated on it," the President asked Harold Brown. The Secretary of Defence was a former director of the Livermore, California, weapons laboratory, ex-president of Cal. Tech. and a brilliant nuclear physicist.

"Of course he could," Brown answered. "The French and the Germans have been going around the world for years trying to tell people you can't get nuclear weapons out of a nuclear power plant so that they can sell more of them."

"Well, the fact is you can. We blew off a bomb made with plutonium that came from a reactor's burned-out fuel rods 15 years ago. They know that. We gave them the results."

"Well, he'd still have to reprocess the plutonium, wouldn't he find a way to get it out of those fuel rods?"

"Mr President, there's a common misconception in the world that reprocessing plutonium is a very complex, costly technique," Brown replied. "It isn't. It's nothing but straightforward chemistry and it's all in books."

"If you want to do it on an amateurish basis, you don't need any of those complicated choppers or cold rooms. All you need is time, money and people and not all that much of any of them."

The President's sceptical regard told Brown that he wasn't convinced.

"You know how the Russians clear a minefield, don't you? They march a company of men through it, right? If Kadhafi used the same technique here, got himself 20 Palestinian commandos willing to expose themselves to more radiation than was good for them for the cause, then the whole thing would become almost terrifyingly simple."

"In six months they could extract enough plutonium from the used fuel rods of a reactor like that to make 20 bombs. In a couple of cow barns where a satellite would never spot them."

The defence secretary sighed. "The PLO gets plenty of commandos to volunteer for suicide raids. Why wouldn't they be able to get 20 of them to volunteer to die of cancer to make a weapon that could destroy Isreal?"

A telephone's buzz interupted Brown. It came from two-thirds of the way across the United States, from Harold Agnew, Director of Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories.

Agnew was one of the few men still alive of the score of scientists who'd been present at the birth of the Atomic Age in a converted squash court under the West Stands of the University of Chicago's Stagg Field on a bitter cold November day in 1942.

When he'd come to Los Alamos with Oppenheimer and Groves to build the first atomic bomb, all the plutonium on planet Earth could fit on the head of a pin with room left for a flight of angels to dance.

And now, Agnew thought moodily? That was a question which had come naturally during the trials of the last hour while a team of his weapons designers had laboured over the blueprint delivered to the White House gate, picking it apart, hunting the one fatal flaw, the one violation of

For its 1732 daily beatings from you, "spare it one good nourishment."
KIWI [illegible] wax-rich polish
[illegible] formulation gives
a longer lasting shine and
its ability to provide better
KIWI
BLACK
SHOE POLISH
KIWI BLACK
KIWI

> ***A white wall of light seemed to explode from the screens of Room 2B890. So blindingly luminous was its flash, so painfully intense its glare, the men in the room flinched and shielded their eyes... The President could think of only one thing: John's revelation of Apocalypse: "Behold, a pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."***

the very precise rules of nuclear weaponry which would render the design meaningless.

His call was routed to a small white squawk box in the centre of the oval table so everyone in the National Security Council conference room could hear him.

"Mr Agnew," the President declared. "Have your people completed their appraisal of the atomic bomb on those blueprints?"

Agnew's voice filtering into the room seemed strangely hesitant.

"Mr President, the drawing on the blueprint which you submitted to us is not for an atomic bomb."

The men in the White House emitted what seemed an almost collective sigh of relief. The distant scientist did not hear them. He continued:—

"It's my very sad duty to inform you that the design on the blueprint is for something a hundred times worse."

A quick nervous gasp in the distant scientist's voice was audible to each of the men and women in the White House basement. "The blueprint is for a thermo-nuclear device. Mr President, a three megaton hydrogen bomb."

"My God!" the President gasped. "Is this really possible?"

Agnew hesitated. The hydrogen bomb represented the ultimate refinement in Man's search for the means of self-destruction. Unlike the atomic bomb, which depended on converting to reality a widely understood scientific theory, it depended on the most potent secret unlocked by Man's brain since the caveman of Antiquity had harnessed fire.

"I admit it strains credibility, Sir," Agnew replied, "but the blunt fact is this is a viable weapon's design. Whether it's from Kadhafi or someone else, someone, somewhere out there has gotten hold of the secret of the hydrogen bomb."

"Could Kadhafi have gotten the material he'd need to build it?" the stunned Chief Executive asked.

"The design calls for lithium deuteride six as its fuel. To obtain that you could start with lithium chloride, which is a very common chemical. Used in long running batteries. And he'd need a lot of heavy water for his tritum, but that isn't all that hard a thing to get these days. What's vital is the recipe, Mr President, not the ingredients."

The President coughed. "Mr Agnew," he asked, "assuming for the moment this device really existed and really was in New York and really was exploded, what would its effect be?"

"It would mean, Sir, that, for all practical purposes, New York City would be wiped off the face of the earth."

"HEY lady, got room in there for me?

The woman couldn't help smiling at the young Marine waiting to board Eastern Airlines' nine o'clock shuttle from New York to Washington. Laila Dajani was used to men's passes. With her long auburn hair, her black prominent eyes, the slight, sensual pout of her well-fleshed lips, she'd been attracting them since she was 18.

She gave a casual toss to her hair, continued on to the Shuttle Terminal from the plane that had just flown her into the city from the nation's capital.

Her beauty, the way she invariably stood out in a crowd was, she knew, a risk. To deliver her letter to the White House, she'd worn the blonde wig and an old polo coat she'd left in the second locker she had opened at National Airport.

She moved casually to the exit, spotting at the door the darkcoated driver of the limousine service she'd used regularly since she had arrived in New York.

"Nice trip, Ma'm?"

"Lovely, thank you."

Laila settled into the car's comfortable upholstery. As they pulled away, she took out her compact and, pretending to adjust her make-up, scrutinised the traffic behind them in the mirrror. They were not, as far as she could tell, being followed.

She sank back into the seat and lit a cigarette. The car, the driver, were a reflection of one of Carlos' golden rules: a smart terrorist always travels first class. The best way to slip undetected about the world, the Venezuelan master terrorist maintained. was in that upper middle class spectrum which lay just below the level of the ostentatious rich, at the very heart of the society he meant to destroy.

The cover he had invented for Laila's two visits to the United States was ideally designed to accomplish just that.

She was on a buying trip for La Rive Gauche, a boutique for wealthy Lebanese on Beirut's Hamra Street, an institution which had survived as such places inevitably do, all the convulsions of the Lebanese Civil War.

Getting a fake Lebanese passport had been simple. Procuring stolen Lebanese passports for Palestinian terrorists was as easy in Beirut as buying postage stamps. Nor did she have the slightest difficulty in getting one of the 200,00 U.S. visas issued annually in the Middle East.

The overworked counsel who'd given her her visa hadn't even bothered to make a phone call to check on her assumed identity; the Rive Gauche letter supporting her application had been enough for him. And so, as Linda Nahar, a Lebanese Christian, she had haunted the showrooms of Bill Blass, Calvin Klein and Oscar de la Renta on her two trips to New York, the first in August, the second beginning in November.

The driver braked to a stop in front of the Hampshire House on Central Park South and, two minutes later, she stepped into the charming disorder of the suite she rented by the month on the 32nd floor.

Moodily, she stepped to the window on to Central Park that constituted one of the sitting-room walls. Looking at the park in its pristine mantle of new snow, at the skaters gliding over the shell to her right, at all these proud facades crawling with blinking pinholes of light, Laila shuddered unavoidably and thought again of Carlos. He was right. Never think of the consequences of your misssion, he'd warned, only of the unexpected problems that could prevent you from carrying it out.

His usually bland features shrouded with concern, the President of the United States stared at the circle of advisers surrounding him. The last great crisis his nation faced when the fanatical supporters of the Ayatollah Khomeini had seized the U. S. embassy in Teheran paled beside this threat.

If this really was true, it was the ultimate act of political terrorism, the almost too inevitable conclusion to a decade of escalating terrorism. And, he reflected bitterly, if it was, a nation whose citizens were living in nomad tents barely a generation ago now possessed the power to destroy the most important city on the planet.

Millions of people are being held hostage, he thought, to one man's extravagant demands. He turned to Jack Eastman. "Jack, what contingency plans do we have to handle something like this?"

It was a question Eastman had anticipated. Locked in a safe in the West Wing were the contingency plans of the U.S. Government, all constantly updated, each wrapped in its black imitation leather jacket. Their origins went back to Henry Kissinger's days. Eastman had reviewed them an hour ago. They dealt with every imaginable world crisis: every one that is, except the one which now confronted the President.

"I am sorry, Sir," Eastman replied. "We don't have any."

If the U.S. had no contingency plan for the threat before the President, it did have an organisation to deal with it. At Los Alamos in Livermore, California, at the old nuclear test ranges beyond Las Vegas, the most important among them, a secret group called

NEST for Nuclear Explosives Search Team was ready to rush scientists and ultra sophisticated detection devices to New York to search for the weapon if it really existed.

In Washington the FBI's Nuclear Emergency Desk had already mobilised thousands of agents and opened contacts with the intelligence services of Britain, France and Germany.

As preparations for a gigantic search of Manhattan began, the President summoned a trio of Air Force communications experts to the White House to analyse how a device, if it really were in Manhattan, could be detonated by long distance remote controls.

"Basically," the senior Air Force colonel told the man in the NSC conference room, "there are two ways to detonate something like this, by telephone or radio." The room was still, all eyes fixed on the speaker.

"To attach the power-pack you'd require for this to the ordinary telephone is very simple matter. Just a question of opening the telephone and connecting a couple of wires.

"An incoming call opens a circuit into a micro-processor in which a pre-programmed code has been stored. The micro-processor automatically compares it with the code and, if the two match, it releases a five volt charge of electricity into the bomb. All a man has to do to explode the bomb is call that number from anywhere in the world and feed his signal."

"It's as easy as that?" the President, jarred, asked

"Yes, Sir, I am afraid it is"

"Can New York be isolated, absolutely sealed off from all incoming telephone calls?" the President asked.

"No, Sir," the colonel replied. "I am afraid that's a technological impossibility."

He turned authoritatively back to his briefing charts. "It is our judgment, however, that in a situation such as the one we've been given, Kadhafi or a terrorist group would choose radio to detonate the device. It would offer more flexibility and is completely independent of existing communications systems.

For a transmission over this distance, he'd have to use long waves which bounce off the ionosphere and come back down to earth. That means low frequencies."

"How many frequencies would be available to him for something like this?" the President asked.

"From Tripoli to new York, a megahertz. One million cycles."

"One million!" The President rubbed the stub of his chin between his thumb and forefinger. "Could we jam all one million of those frequencies?"

"No, Sir."

"Why?"

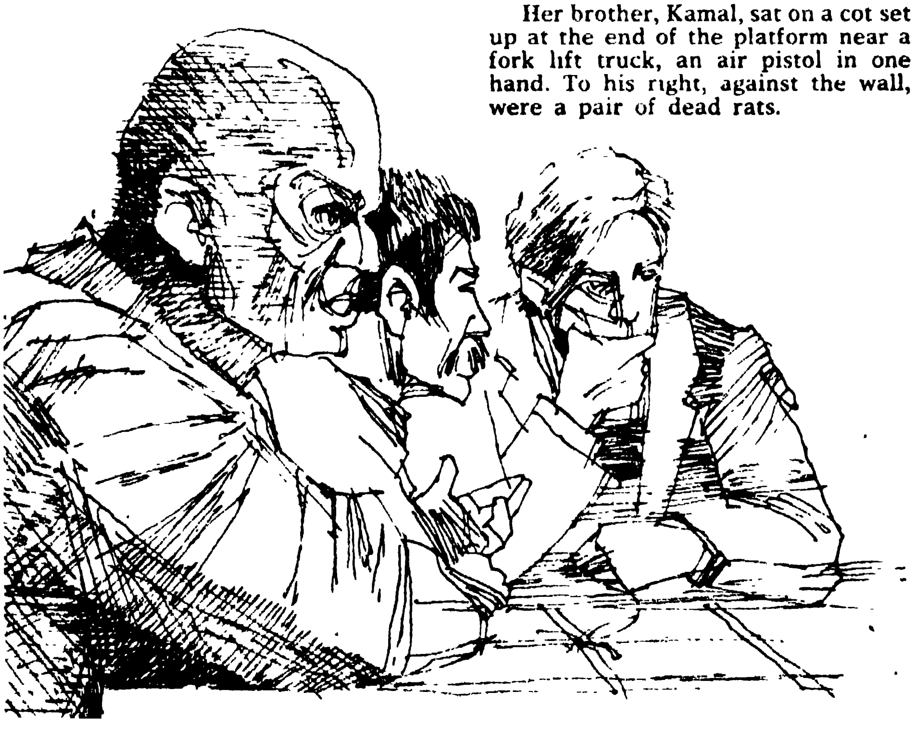
"We simply don't have the transmitter capacity"

As the colonel was speaking, the red light on the telephone at Eastman's elbow flashed. It was the Army Signal Corps warrant officer in charge of the White House switchboard. Eastman stiffened listening to him.

"Mr President," he announced, "the switchboard's just received a telephone message from an anonymous caller He hung up before they could trace the call. He said there was a message for you of the utmost importance in locker K 602 in the luggage containers next to the Eastern Airlines shuttle Terminal at National airport"

A thin partition separated the garage from the abandoned warehousing are to its rear. Through it, a faint scraping sound drifted into the garage. Laila Dajani shuddered listening to it. It was the sound of scurrying rats.

Her brother, Kamal, sat on a cot set up at the end of the platform near a fork lift truck, an air pistol in one hand. To his right, against the wall, were a pair of dead rats.



Laila's second brother, the eldest of the trio, entered the garage. Whalid Dajani's face was pale; specks of sweat sparkled at his temples.

Laila stirred impatiently. "How much time do we have left?"

"Enough," Kamal answered. He picked a piece of cold pizza from a flat cardboard box by his cot. As he did, his sister noticed the name and address of the restaurant where he'd bought it printed on the carton.

"Are you sure no-one's going to be able to identify you in those places?" she asked.

Kamal gave her an angry glance. The constant boss. "Let's set up our firing circuits," she said.

"Why?" Whalid protested "We still have plenty of time."

"Because I don't want anything to go wrong."

Whalid sighed and walked over to a grey metal case the size of a large attache case resting on the floor beside his bomb. Nothing could have looked more innocent than that case. Labels from TWA, Lufthansa, half-a-dozen of Europe's best hotels were stuck to it.

One blazing summer's day six nonths earlier, the technical director of the Libyan telephone system had come to Ishui Kamaguchi, the resident director of Nippon Electric, the Japanese firm which had installed Libya's telephones.

What he wanted, he had explained, was a device which would offer a means of remote radio control of an electrical discharge, a system that would be both infallible and absolutely inviolable

Six weeks later, Kamaguchi had presented the Libyans the case on the garage floor and a bill for £70,000. Only the genius of the Japanese for miniaturisation could have produced the array of fail-safe devices built into the case to frustrate any attempt to tamper with its functioning.

Whalid opened its triple locking system and folded back the case to reveal a pale blue control panel. On it was a cathode tube screen, a keyboard and five keys bearing specific commands. There was also a locked cassette player. Fixed into it was a 30-minute BASF tape, a small red crescent in its upper right hand corner. It contained instructions for the case's minicomputer.

The cathode tube screen lit up with a green glow. The words "STAND BY" formed on the screen. Nervously, Whalid rubbed his sweating hands together. Beside him, Laila smoothed out a 16-point check list. He glanced at it, then punched the key marked "INIT!" The word "IDENTIFICATION" appeared on the screen.

Carefully Whalid punched the code 01C2 on to the keyboard. "CORRECT" appeared on the screen. Had his code been wrong the word "INCORRECT" would have appeared there and Whalid would have had exactly 30 seconds to correct his mistake or the case would have auto-destructed.

On the screen, the words "STORAGE DATA" appeared. Whalid looked at the check list in his sister's hands, then punched F19A on to his keyboard. Through the tape player's window he could see the BASF cassette begin to play.

Shortly after 11.30 p.m. the President, riding in the front seat of an unmarked Secret Service car, rode up to the river entrance of the Pentagon. A military policeman led the Chief Executive to a plain white door under an archway bearing the words "Joint Chiefs of Staff". Its only identification was a set of figures, 2B890. Beyond that door lay an Ali Baba's Cave of the electronic age, the most mind-boggling display of technological wizardry of which 20th Century Man is capable, the National Military Command of the United States.

Seated in a leather arm-chair at the oval conference table dominating Room 2B890, the President could, quite literally, watch the world go by. Every communication system the United States possessed every electronic surveillance network, all the vast electronic gadgetry at the disposition of the CIA, the National Security Agency, the Defence Intelligence Agency, all ultimately funnelled into that immaculately white room not much larger than a small movie theatre.

The network of KH-11 satellites girdling the globe could flash on to any of its six movie-sized screens a live television picture of any quarter of the planet.

He could listen, thanks to the CIA, to the sound of men's footsteps walking in certain offices in Moscow, Potsdam and Prague, overhear their most intimate conversations, the clink of their vodka glasses or count the clicks on their telephones as they dialled a number.

And, from that leather armchair, the President could be both a spectator and a participant in the ultimate tragedy. He could order a Minuteman missile launched from its site in South Dakota, then, like a spectator in a movie house, watch on one of the screens before him as the thermonuclear horror he had wrought devastated the people, the streets, the tenements of some Soviet city.

The President settled into that armchair and indicated he was ready to begin. The rear admiral in charge of the centre flicked a series of controls. A stretch of desolate sands reddening in the first light of morning appeared on the screen. At its centre, barely visible, was a tower.

"There, Mr President, is the location we were given on the note that was found at National Airport."

The FBI had plucked the note signalled by the White House's mysterious caller from left luggage locker K602 at the airport. Its contents were spare and simple: at midnight Washington time, in a corner of the Awabari sand sea in the south western corner of Libya, Muammer Kadhafi would provide the United States with a conclusive demonstration of his ability to carry out the threat in his earlier communication.

A second screen lit up. On this one was a detailed resolution of the tower on the first. It was a spindly metal assembly resembling an old fashioned oil drilling rig.

"Harold," the President asked his Defence Secretary, "what do you make of it?"

"It looks a lot like the pictures I've seen of the old 'Trinity' test site." 'Trinity' was the code name for the test of the first atomic bomb in the New Mexico desert in July 1945. "Simple. Primitive. But efficent."

Brown looked at the screen like a professor studying a student's design, hunting for its flaws. "Somewhere around there we should be picking up some sign of the command post he'd use to set this thing off."

"We've swept the area for it, sir," he answered. "Unfortunately, we haven't been able to spot anything."

"Of course you haven't." The voice was that of Delbert Crandell, the Secretary of Energy. "Because there isn't any. That Arab son of a bitch could never do something like this. Two million people. That's all he's got in his country, two million people. They haven't got the knowledge, haven't got the technology, haven't got the infrastructure.

The President ignored him. "What about fall-out?" He asked.

On one of the screens, superimposed over a map of North-East Africa, there appeared a sausage shaped arc thrusting across Southern Libya, Northern Chad, the Sudan and into the southern corner of Saudi Arabia.

"Sir, this is the fallout pattern we're predicting based on the strength and direction of the upper air winds over the site," the admiral replied.

It was one minute to midnight. On the clocks suspended on one wall of the room, the white numbers silently clicked off each passing second.

Harold Brown sensed the President's anguish. "Well, sir," he said, in a voice so soft only the Chief Executive beside him could hear it, "either we have a terrible problem on our hands or the cruellest hoax anyone's ever played on a U.S. Government."

The President continued to gaze straight ahead, concentrating totally on the screens before him. Four precisely aligned zeros appeared on the clock's panels. No one saw them. Every eye was on the screen along the room's far wall.

Five seconds, ten seconds. Nothing happened. Fifteen seconds. Thirty seconds. The first creak of twisting armchairs indicated the tension pent up in the room was easing. Forty-five seconds. One minute.

"I told you he didn't have it." Satisfaction seemed to mix with the sweat sparkling on Crandell's face. "No way he could have..."

He never finished. A white wall of light seemed to explode from the screens of Room 2B890. So blindingly luminous was its flash, so painfully intense its glare, the men in the room flinched and shielded their eyes.

Then, too stunned to react or speak, the two dozen men in the room stared, thanks to their satellite cameras, at a sight no human eye had ever beheld, the bowels of hell, the incandescent heart of a thermo-nuclear explosion.

The President squeezed Harold Brown's forearm in his fingers. He could think of only one thing: John's revelation of the Apocalypse: "Behold, a pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."

Now, he thought, a Fifth Horseman has emerged from the entrails of Hell to scourge humanity with terror, with arms so terrible even John's hallucinating imagination could not have concieved them.

"My God," he whispered to the man beside him. "Oh my God, Harold, how did he ever do it?"

To be continued

The racism of the British makers of *Gandhi*

Indians are called "bloody Indians." And there's little sign of the much-touted foreign finance for the project

Bombay: On 1 March the production of the most expensive (and still quite inaccurate) film made in the country, Sir Richard Attenborough's "biographical" *Gandhi*, almost came apart because of the arrogant racism of the British members of the unit. Nearly sixty Indians on the staff, including some security personnel, were fed with the racist abuses they had to endure from some of the British crew who would constantly spout phrases like "fucking Indians" and "bloody Indians"—and they formally complained to Attenborough, during the shooting in Bombay.

This was not the first time that such a complaint was being made. Earlier, in January, when Attenborough was shooting the Jallianwala Bagh sequence at Delhi's Zakir Hussain College, the Indians on the unit went on a one-day strike when special effects technician Arun Patil was slapped by a British special effects technician called David. Shooting could be resumed only after David handed over a written apology to Patil.

It is little wonder that the Indians have begun referring to Indo-British Films, which is making the movie, as Attenborough's East India Company. The unit has become a hotbed of discrimination—and no one, particularly not the government which has given Attenborough such large dollops of finance, seems to be worried about it. Our government gets upset about the Nationality Bill in Britain, but conveniently turns a blind eye to discrimination against Indians on Indian soil by a bunch of obviously arrogant Britishers.

The big four Indians in the unit are co-producer Rani Dubey, second-unit director Govind Nihalini, associate producer Suresh Jindal and production executive Shama Habibullah, and they are treated well enough, but most of the other Indians have to suffer discrimination in daily allowances, accommodation and general behaviour. Publicity and casting executive Dolly Thakore resigned from the film because she was arbitrarily denied accommodation during the Bombay spell of shooting and work. It was also quite apparent to everyone that leading Indian artistes like Saeed Jaffrey and Roshan Seth were also being constantly humiliated, though they would not, or could not, openly protest. The incident which sparked off the Indian protest on 1 March was simple to the point of being childish—and completely representative of the attitude of some Britishers on the sets. Faiyaz Mulgaonkar, a child who plays Gandhi's youngest son in the film, was being given pastries by his mother during the tea break. Suddenly Jerry Levi, the location manager, accosted her and shouted that she was a greedy hog. She protested that it was her boy who was eating the pastries, and surely he could be forgiven for wanting to eat a couple of pastries at teatime, but Levi continued to rant against her and against the "bloody Indians." Once again, Attenborough had to calm things by getting the Britisher to apologise. What has hurt the Indians most was that they were, as one of them put it, "abused in our own home by foreigners who are behaving as if they are the East India Company."

Attenborough and Rani Dubey would have had to be blind not to see what was going on, and how the Indians were being treated. Even Rani Dubey is said to have expressed her displeasure at the behaviour of some British members of the unit.

Financial problems cropped up for the *Gandhi* project towards the end of February, some three weeks after the unit moved to Bombay from Delhi on 2 February. The much-touted foreign money had not yet become visible till 1 March, though Attenborough is supposed to raise two-thirds of the production cost from abroad. "Where is the foreign money that is to be invested in the film?" asked one unit member in a talk with this correspondent at Bombay adding, "we have not seen it yet. All the money that has been spent so far is the money that the NFDC has given." The financial position was so tight for Indo-British Films by mid-February that there were whispers that the NFDC might be asked for an additional loan, over and above the Rs. 7 crores already promised. At the NFDC, officials have admitted that their inquiries about the film's production are not being answered clearly by Indo-British Films.

The case of a person called Julian Wall is typical of the many mysteries surrounding the production of *Gandhi*. Though Wall is not under contract for the film, and so nobody knows either his function or his salary, he is paid a regular daily allowance of Rs 300. (Indian unit members, apart from the production heads, are paid Rs. 200 per day.) While all British unit members get an overall weekly allowance of Rs 2,550 for personal expenses, Indian unit members get a maximum of Rs 1,400 per week. In some grades, Indian staff members get as little as Rs 200. No Britisher is paid less than Rs 2,550 per week. The entire British unit, when in Bombay, stayed at the posh Searock Hotel but many Indians were kept in a different hotel. The Indians staying at Searock Hotel were asked to share rooms, while all British unit members had a room to themselves. For the security personnel who accompanied the *Gandhi* unit from Delhi, the cruellest fate at Bombay was that they had to find and pay for accommodation themselves. Nor, for that matter, are the security personnel, the car drivers or the other Indian staff being paid any overtime by Indo-British Films, though they have to work long hours from 5 am to 8 pm or later. The Indian staff, hired at far smaller salaries than the Britishers, are naturally angry at this.

Added to the discrimination in money matters is the fact that the

On the sets of Gandhi; *(inset) Rani Dubey*

Indians barring the top people, are generally given a raw deal in the kind of work they are made to do. The assistant directors, for instance, have no creative say at all and are merely reduced to such tasks as translating orders for the crowds or collecting properties. For example Uday Shanker Pani, who had been appointed as the first assistant director when shooting started, has been switched to the production section and has been ordered not to come on the sets. With the exception of Govind Nihalini, who is the second-unit director, no Indian technician has any decision-making authority. As the film has progressed, the retrenchment of the staff has also been disproportionate. While four out of five Indian assistant directors were given notice, commencing from the end of the Bombay schedule in mid-March, only one British assistant director out of the original four has been retrenched.

A Special Correspondent

KARNATAKA

What is Bangarappa up to?

S. Bangarappa

Bangalore: The question uppermost in most minds in Karnataka today is: when will Mr S. Bangarappa be asked to quit the Congress(I)? The question has been uttered on countless platforms numerous times and it has caused waves in the already troubled waters of Karnataka politics.

Political observers feel that it is only a matter of time before a concrete move is taken against the unorthodox former socialist. Already the errant Mr Bangarappa has been issued a notice by Mr Govind P. Voderaj, the Congress(I) Legislature Party secretary, on the instructions of the chief minister, why disciplinary action should not be taken against him.

Mr Gundu Rao wants the party to take action against his former revenue minister merely because Bangarappa wants the ideologies of the Congress(I) to be practised in the state—the implementation of the PM's 20-point programme and the Land Reforms Act. This, Mr Bangarappa feels will not be possible as long as Mr Rao is the CM of the state. Therefore Mr Rao should quit. However, the same political observers feel that Bangarappa's rumblings of discontent has a motive: he is angling for the post of chief minister.

In fact, Bangarappa has gone a step further. In a private conversation with one of his confidants, he is believed to have said that Mr Rao would be out of power soon. And Bangarappa has been taking broadsides at the CM which has caused a lot of embarrassment to his own partymen. In his recent tour of the state he lashed out against the government of Gundu Rao: "The state government is drifting from the professed Congress(I) ideologies...People will slip away from the Congress(I) if chief minister R. Gundu Rao is not controlled in time...The present government is hand-in-glove with blackmarketeers and hoarders." All this has upset the Congress(I) and even some of Bangarappa's close associates like G. Y. Krishnan, MP and AICC(I) joint secretary, and Mr C. K. Jaffer Sharief, the minister of state for railways.

But Bangarappa is not the only one to have spoken out against the ruling government. It is well-known that dissidence is rampant in the ruling party. It is also well-known that within the dissidents there are different groups and the chances of all the groups uniting is remote. Meanwhile, it is ironic that while the present government continues to blame opposition leaders for the deteriorating law and order situation in the state, the infighting in the ruling party is making its own contributions to it. Almost every day there are clashes between the supporters of Gundu Rao and Bangarappa.

What is the game that Bangarappa is playing? As long as Bangarappa continues to maintain his power in the district of Shimoga, the rice bowl of Karnataka, he will have a solid base in his party. And most important, he is totally loyal to Mrs Indira Gandhi. But how long will Mrs Gandhi go on tolerating his venomous outbursts against the state government and Gundu Rao? That is something which only time will tell.

Louise Fernandes

FILM INSTITUTE

A president with more power

Pune: Shyam Benegal's appointment as president of the Film and TV Institute (FTII) Society, announced on 5 February, is one of many major changes in the administrative superstructure of the notoriously glamorous film school, at Pune, that have been brought about by the ministry of information and broadcasting, which funds the institute.

Thanks to a change in the FTII society's constitution, Benegal becomes the first president to have effective power over policy and administrative matters at the FTII. He is both president of the FTII Society and chairman of the governing council, which is the real power-wielding body controlling the institute. As a result, Benegal will influence the institute's running to a far greater extent than any of its previous presidents, who were all titular figureheads, since they had no say in the governing council. The FTII society president's real powers were so insignificant in the past that its very first president, the illustrious Satyajit Ray, did not attend a single meeting of the FTII society for the whole of his tenure.

The changes in the constitution, decided in September 1980, are envisaged to re-vitalize the running of the film institute and have been made in line with the recommendations made by a three-man committee set up in 1978. Benegal was offered the prestigious post after veteran Hrishikesh Mukherjee turned it down. The other contenders for the job were Mrinal Sen and Kumar Shahani. Mrinal Sen lost in the race because ministry officials felt that he is not "a responsible committee man." As a nominated member of the erstwhile working group on film policy (1978-80) Mrinal Sen did not attend a single meeting of the group, according to A. K. Dutt, secretary in the ministry of information and broadcasting.

Shyam Benegal

Kumar Shahani, the FTII alumni who made the feature film *Maya Darpan* in 1971, was a far more serious rival to Benegal for the presidentship. Shahani has a considerable following among direction-course students at the institute. With batch-mate Mani Kaul, Shahani is a cult-figure among his young admirers and he figured at the top of a short-list put up by the students for the new president. A few senior members of the teaching staff were also lobbying for Shahani but the fact that he has made only one feature film, and is yet to achieve the eminence that Benegal already enjoys in Indian cinema, led the ministry to turn his name down without much hesitation.

Shahani's supporters among the student-body are extremely unhappy over the final nomination. They complain that the new governing council, which will serve till 30 September 1983, has been converted into Benegal's *Manthan* institute: prominent Benegal associates Govind Nihalini and Shabana Azmi have also been co-opted into the new governing council.

Though no protest-cables were received by the FTII's big brother guardian, the ministry of information and broadcasting, till 13 February, there has always been a vocal, albeit small, group of direction-course students who have [illegible] Benegal's film-making style, criticising him for his commercial cinema overtones [illegible] films and for [illegible] ground. However eight [illegible] new appointments were made [illegible] no protest had been made by any student to the director of the FTII.

One reason given by the ministry for the inclusion of Benegal associates in the governing council is that he was invited as a consultant when it came to nominating the council's member. The other members of the expanding governing council are film-makers Hrishikesh Mukherjee, G. Aravindan, Saeed Mirza and Girish Kasarvalli, actor Naseeruddin Shah, art director Bansi Chandra Gupta, stage director Vijaya Mehta, B. V. Karanth of the National School of Drama, critic Bikram Singh, V. P. Sathe, Vijaya Mulay, M. Kiran Karnik of ISRO, A. V. Chothani of the Anand Dairy Board and a complement of six government of India officials.

More changes in the running of the FTII are in the offing according to A. K. Dutt of the ministry of information and broadcasting. A scheme for rotating members of the teaching faculty is likely to come next.

Anil Saari

Saudis blacklist three Indian firms

Jeddah: Three Indian firms, the Ahmedabad Manufacturing Calico Printing Co Ltd and its subsidiary, the ILAC Ltd—textile export division, Piyush Parikh and Co and Bharatkumar and Co, have been blacklisted along with 100-odd international companies and shipping lines by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Commerce. Their [illegible] Indian firm have business dealings with Israel. The news of [illegible] has been re[illegible] leading financial magazine. The last two Indian firms, mentioned were found to be exporting Israeli diamonds.

The Saudis have already asked the 40 members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to boycott nations dealing with Israel. If the member-nations heed to their Saudi leader then the boycott weapon will be [illegible] when used [illegible] blunted [illegible] been [illegible] countries.

A Special Correspondent

CORRUPTION

Madhya Pradesh text-book bungle

Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh Textbook Corporation, the monopoly publisher of textbooks has in the past provided good stories to scribes regarding the difficulties that school-[illegible] face due to [illegible] textbooks in the [illegible] the Corporation is in the news, this time for an entirely new reason: the [illegible] activities of one of its top officials. With the support of the education minister, [illegible], a former clerk is now [illegible] the topmost position [illegible]. Its present director, [illegible] is being eased out [illegible] make way for this man who has good political connections. He is humiliated and insulted in front of his subordinates. He is called to the bungalow of the minister who is the ex-officio chairman of the Corporation, and made to wait there for hours to get the chairman's signature on the files.

With the director losing his grip over the administration, the Corporation has become a den of corruption. It has virtually been taken over by a gang of swindlers. According to the findings of a top level departmental enquiry, the gang sells paper to printers and prepares false vouchers, sells books and manipulates the accounts accordingly, takes commissions from tranport operators, pays lower wage rates to labourers and gives advantages to the bigger booksellers by giving them books on credit.

The gang leader, none other than the blue-eyed boy of the minister—the former clerk, has of late developed a penchant for travelling to printers of textbooks all over the country. It is reported that in a recent tour he used a government car to take him to a press owner in UP. He was then taken to a bazaar, where the press owner was 'allowed' to make some purchases for him. (Incidentally, it was the same press owner who had earlier charged the Corporation the highest rate for a job entrusted to his press). The whole tour, that included a visit to the home town of the official was made without the permission of the director and not much was accomplished by way of work for the Corporation.

The officer, now, is reportedly taking a keen interest in building a Rs 20-lakh complex of the Corporation.

It has further succeeded in securing the monopoly rights of manufacturing and distribution of notebooks which implies that the Corporation will not only be in charge of the distribution of textbooks, but of notebooks as well. This has led many to fear that like textbooks, notebooks too will soon be in short supply in the state.

A Special Correspondent

Melbourne's socialite fights for suite

Melbourne: Christmas of 1980 was not one of merrymaking and good cheer for Peter Janson, the racing car driver and owner of the rooftop plush suite of Melbourne's Windsor Hotel. His comfortable existence was shattered by the new lessees of the Windsor Hotel, Hotel Oberoi (International) Pvt Ltd, who served him a notice to quit his rooftop domain—the Towers—by Christmas 1980.

Janson, who has been living in the Towers for the last ten years was naturally irked. He has spent around $350,000 on renovations to give it what he calls "a gentlemanly look." Embellished by his years of collection of trophies, Victorian memorabilia, stuffed animals and birds and several antique objects, Janson's suite almost looks like a museum. But it is not merely a museum. Janson's suite is his empire—he lives there with his pets: a doberman hound, a magpie and a crow. The Towers also hold a lot of memories for Janson for it is the place where he has treated the rich and the famous. Among them are Omar Sharif, the Maharaja of Baroda, Spike Milligan, the former British PM Harold Macmillan, the Marquis of Blandford and his motor racing friends Graham Hill, Stirling Moss and Jackie Stewart.

The issue came up before Mr Justice Gobbo of the Victoria Supreme Court. Mr Janson recalled in the affidavit. "I have had from time to time staying with me at the Towers people of identity. It is my belief that those matters have also added to the attraction and popularity of the Windsor Hotel and has accordingly provided an added benefit to the owners of it." He also stated that the managing director of Windsor Hotels Ltd, Mr Alan Todd, had once promised him that he was entitled to live rent-free in the Towers as long as Windsor remained standing. Mr Justice Gobbo ordered that Oberoi could not throw Janson out of the hotel or do anything like that till further hearing of the summons. Janson has won the first round. He does not think for once that he might lose the second round. All Janson said was, "We think positive."

A Special Correspondent

Americans snub 'intellectuals'

Bombay: The American consul general in Bombay Mr John Malott has virtually accused state finance minister Mr Ramrao Adik of being in the pay of a foreign power. Mr Ramrao, Adik, along with Mr Rajni Patel, Mr Sharad Pawar, Mr R. K. Karanjia, Mr T. Godiwala, Mr Basu Bhattacharya, Mr S. G. Sardesai, Mr S. Y. Kulhatkar, Mr Sukumar Damle, Mr Samuel Augustine, Mr Vithal Chaudhary and other "intellectuals," had last month written a letter to the US President Mr Ronald Reagan accusing former President Carter of a "Mad desire to dominate the developing world and to contain the so-called threat from the Soviet Union" and of bringing "the whole world to the brink of war." They said, "We are afraid Mr President that your policy is being directed towards the same catastrophic objective."

The letter further said "The top leaders and advisers that you have appointed in your cabinet who were once Nixon's notorious hatchetmen, the selection of General Alexander Haig as Secretary of State, Casper Weinberger nicknamed 'Cap the Knife' as Defence Secretary and a host of other hawks, confirms our fears. The sparking of wars in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, their advocacy and even use of nuclear and chemical weapons, opposition to detente and reduction of arms cannot be forgotten."

The letter ended with the "intellectuals" saying "This is the voice of the people of the world" and listed five demands which included withdrawal of US naval aircraft carriers and rapid deployment force and return of Diego Garcia to Mauritius. The letter was presented to Mr Malott and he was asked to forward the same to President Reagan.

Mr Malott returned it to the senders with a note which read "I do not concur with the falsehoods and allegations made in this letter and therefore have no intentions of forwarding it to the President. If you like to do so on your own you may purchase stamps of Rs 2.80 I am sure that the country which funds your organisation would be able to spare you the money."

All the "intellectuals" including the state finance minister Mr Ramrao Adik swallowed this colossal insult of "being funded" by a foreign country which is implicit in Mr Mallot's letter. The "intellectuals" under the banner of the All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation merely sent a one-line statement saying "the US reply is a reflection of its guilty conscience."

Olga Tellis

INDIANS ABROAD

Sikhs pay for mistaken identity

Kansas: Since the past year, but particularly after the release of the hostages, Americans are taking out their pent up frustrations on Iranians. And in the process wrong nationalities are coming under the heat. In the University of Kansas, Americans thrashed up two Pakistanis mistaking them for Iranian immigrants.

Across the nation, Asians, Arabs and Persians are finding it dangerous to wear a beard. People are beating them first; asking questions later.

Indian sikhs are the prime target. Shackled by religious taboos that prevent them from shaving their beards and snipping off their hair, they have no way to conceal their resemblance with Iranians. And they are paying for it. Americans taunt and verbally abuse them. Some throw beer bottles at them. In schools their children have been beaten up by their classmates. Others have people drive up cars beside them and scream "Khomeni!"

In California, where feeling against them run high many complain that they are refused gasoline, services and food. Others have been the target of obscene gestures. A store-owner in Sylmar, Los Angeles complains that

KARNATAKA

Gundu Rao baits the press

Bangalore: "Methinks the man doth protest too much!" This was the instinctive reaction of all those who heard Karnataka chief minister, R. Gundu Rao, in his no-holds barred public condemnation of two of the state's leading dailies on 25 February. This was not the first time that Mr Rao has attacked the press for attempting, to discredit and dethrone him. But his lashing out was unique: RGR openly declared war against the *Deccan Herald* and *Prajavani*, the state's largest circulated English and Kannada dailies, published by the Printer's Mysore Limited, naming them for the first time, It may be remembered that the offices of two newspapers had been seiged in September 1980 by the Youth Congress(I) (*Sunday* 2 November 1980).

This time RGR excelled himself in his hour and-a-half speech at the public function organised at Bangalore's Glass House, apparently to felicitate the state minister of co-operation, H. C. Shrikantiah. The CM almost forgot the object of the meeting and launched his tirade against the two newspapers and their proprietors for "publishing lies." He said they were trying to promote their own candidate, S. Bangarappa, for the post of chief minister. Said the CM· "This is impossible in my generation People will make the chief minister, not they (the newspapers)." Accusing the newspapers of "blackmailing," RGR shouted out to his audience of loyal supporters· "Is it right for the press to write such stories? Is this the duty of the press?" The newspapers deliberately neglected to publish any "good news" about his government

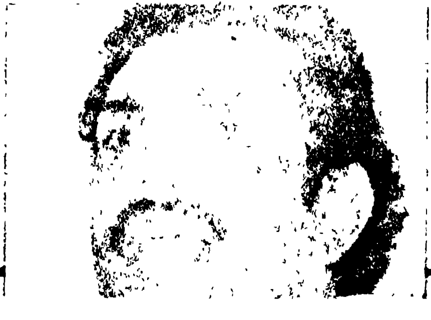
He accused the proprietors of the newspapers, who also own extensive excise business, of "anti-propaganda." Mr Rao was referring to adverse reports about him in the newspapers because he had dealt with the excise transactions strictly.

Mr Rao continued his tirade: "These people are blackmailing me. People should understand it. They are spoiling the press for the sake of their own caste and money. People will teach a lesson to this excise lobby...If they want to overthrow my government let them contest the elections in 1983. Let them have their own Deccan Herald and Prajavani party. I am prepared to face the challenge. Our party is also prepared to face the challenge," he said gesticulating wildly. And then he warned: "The proprietors will find it impossible to utilise the media for their caste and profession. These kinds of propaganda acts are acts of traitors." Mr Rao's outburst seems to be based on a special branch report that the proprietors of the two newspapers were trying their utmost to make S. Bangarappa the next CM of Karnataka. The other reason for his outburst was the newspapers' reporting on the activities of dissidents in the Congress(I) in the state. The articles had appeared when Mr Bangarappa had spoken out openly against Gundu Rao. There were no dissidents in the state and all that the newspapers had printed were "all lies." He continued: "If they go on writing lies then the day will come when the people and the Congress workers may take out a case against them."

The words were from the mouth of the same man who standing on the floor of the Karnataka Assembly barely a month ago, had used a report from *Sudhā* (a Kannada weekly also published by the Printer's Mysore Ltd) saying it was an excellent example of objective and correct reporting.

Louise Fernandes

Gundu Rao



N SUNDARAJ

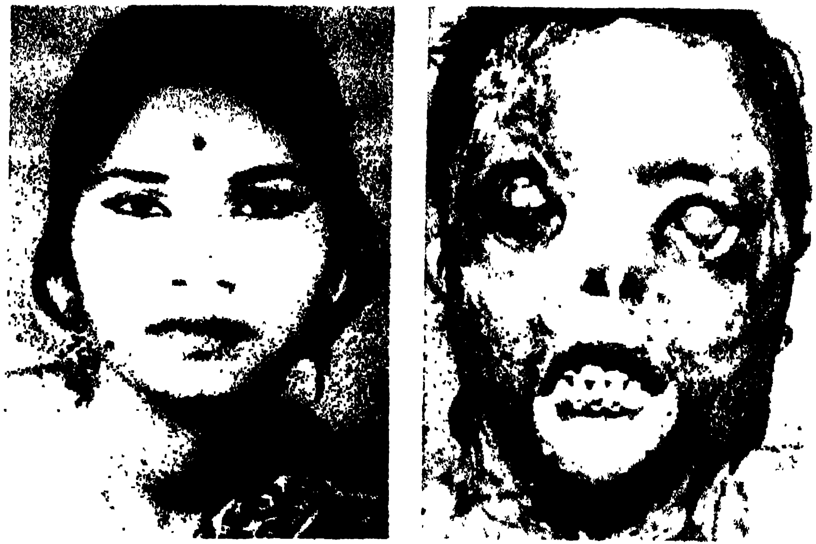
some clients have wrecked his store and manhandled him. Many complain that they are being discriminated against in jobs. Indeed, many are so scared that they dare not move around at night without an American friend who can explain their background to enraged mobs.

Despite their impressive numbers, there are about 8,000 sikhs in Los Angeles alone, the sikhs are worried at the backlash resulting from no fault of their own. Early in February, a massive campain was launched to educate the American populace of their true heritage. Carrying placards and banners they descended on campuses in Los Angeles to educate the American public.

Meanwhile, even as the Indian sikhs suffer the anger of an inflamed public opinion, the Iranians themselves blend easily into the American society and are hard to distinguish.

Achal Mehra

Stop this barbarity against women!



Mrs Rama as she was and now

Dehra Dun: Mrs Rama, a 25-year-old housewife, was a beautiful woman. She no longer is, thanks to her barbarous and inhuman husband. She had been married for nine years when one fine morning her husband threw acid on her face. A case was instituted; her husband was found guilty and sentenced. But the law could not give her back her beauty.

The Himalayan Health Service Society has stepped in to give her back a small bit of her past looks. This voluntary organisation has decided to provide her with the services of the eminent plastic surgeon, Dr Yogi Aeron, since she has no means of income. The Society is sending out fervent appeals for donations to help Mrs Rama. All donations may be addressed to D. N. Pandey, Secretary, The Himalayan Health Service Society, 1/49 Tagore Colony, Dehra Dun, UP.

FIRST TEST

Once again, irresponsible batting

Wellington: The Maoris are New Zealand's first settlers. Indeed, Kupe—a legendary explorer belonging to this tribe—is reported to have landed in the Wellington area early in 950 AD, whereas land purchase by the British did not commence till 1839. But as is noticeable in most parts of Australia, it is the Anglo-Saxon culture that dominates over South Sea trends, and New Zealand's capital city is another example of this scenario.

When it comes to sports the influence is again quite British although the main inheritance happens to be rugby. Actually, this game of crunching tackles, speedy touchdowns and spectacular conversions is well-nigh an obsession in the country: the people sit up nights and watch live television coverage of goings-on between third parties in far away Europe. In fact, to a great extent, the infection has affected the Maoris and Polynesians too. But not in the same way as cricket. This more lavish and lengthy enterprise—cricket—remains very much a "white" interest.

Of course, it is over-limit cricket that has really caught the imagination of the public here and this was clearly evident from the response to the two one-day internationals that preceded the Wellington engagement. But even in the first test, the crowd in three of the four days was much in excess of expectations. Quite possibly, the reality of India never losing a series to New Zealand and the upgraded amenities after the "face-lift" at the Basin Reserve also contributed to the appeal.Indeed,the only aspect of the Basin Reserve warranting criticism is the condition of the out field, which was treacherously bumpy and caused Yograj Singh an injury on the cheekbone.

Yograj's inclusion in the side set off a minor flutter on the first morning. The replacement of Doshi and Yadav by Ravi Shastri and Kirti Azad was more or less on the cards. And when Ghavri failed to recover from a sprain in the neck, Binny became a logical choice. But the apparent ousting of Yashpal by Yograj was not quite anticipated. Of course, with the progress of the match it became obvious that Kirti and not Yograj had displaced Yashpal, for the former was hardly utilised as a bowler; he sends down fastish off-breaks. What probably swayed the selectors was the greenness of the wicket, demanding in theory, an additional fast bowler. In the event, Yogaj after a decent first spell, in course of which he compelled the batsmen to negotiate his deliveries and picked his only wicket in the match, made no further impression. Binny on the other hand produced his best stint in the entire tour in the New Zealand second innings.

Ravi Shastri

With Shastri still untried, almost the entire burden of bowling New Zealand out twice in a match fell on Kapil Dev. No matter how extraordinary his talents, it is heartless to expect this man to be at his peak in every outing. No bowler in the world can conform to such consistency. Indeed, judging by figures, he did not perform too badly, for he scooped up seven wickets in the match.

The rest of the story was a saga of batting failures with India getting 223 and 190 in their two innings and New Zealand 100 in their second innings, which gave them victory by 62 runs, with a little more than a day to spare.

Wellington is infamous for its gale-force winds and cold climate. In fact, the last time the Indians visited this city—which was under Bishan Bedi in 1976—the temperature was down to six degrees centrigrade—in other words cricket in double sweaters and long johns. On this occasion, though, barring the second day, the breeze was of moderate velocity. Moreover, it was bright and sunny for long periods.

Patil thrives in courting danger

and, therefore, cannot be accused of an unnatural approach when he goes for his shots. Indeed, his record during this tour being what it is, it would be unwise to curb his attacking instincts, for it is precisely such impulse that carried him to top scores of 64 and 42. But Azad, in his first test, could not withstand the pressure, while Kapil Dev stuck to being recklessness personified.

One wonders what kind of an impact the caution and circumspection of the 18-year-old Shastri had on the elders. Arriving in Wellington only hours before the match, this Bombay undergraduate emphasised that he has as much potential as a batsman and as a left-arm spinner. Experience will teach him to throw up the ball in the right arc and turn the ball more and in all likelihood add many more victims to his bag of six in the match.

Lastly, it was interesting to note that New Zealand could bundle out a side in tests without a single wicket being captured by Hadlee—this occured in the first innings and was largely due to Cairns's return of 5 for 33. Even in the fourth innings, this Christchurch fast bowler was far from his fiery and accurate self. But all the same he got four wickets.

So this was a great morale booster for New Zealand. But their fielding remained as efficient and enthusiastic as one had seen in Australia. "The umpires will do you in," an Englishman colleague had warned prior to the journey across the Tasman Sea. What transpired, in fact, was supervision of very high quality, and the early morning vigil by one of the Indian reserves to ensure that the grass was mowed adequately on the fourth day proved a waste of time because the Indians, and no one else, did themselves in.

Ashis Ray

Who is celibate?

Celinamma Thottil

Trivandrum: A Catholic priest goes to a sanatorium in Kerala for religious duties. Later, he meets some of the inmates. One of them is a middle-aged nun, in the advanced stages of TB, in a private ward. The hopelessly sick nun looks at the priest, suddenly takes his hands and places them on her bosom. "I don't know what this craving is," she says gaspingly. "But I want you to feel me. " That was a little more than ten years ago. And the priest, who came from an orthodox religious order, was at first repulsed. But "as he touched the nun's bosom, he couldn't help feeling the thrill. And I kept asking myself, what is it, what is it that makes a terribly sick person demand sexual gratification? What is this celibacy about? Is it really possible to be celibate?"

A few months later, after debating endlessly whether he should remain a priest or not, Rev J. P. Thottil came out of the church and became one of the earliest deserters. His action caused shocks throughout Kerala and brought him instant excommunication. Father of three children, husband of an ex-nun, J. P. Thottil is a favourite of the dissidents. Says the ex-priest: "They tolerate and befriend me for I work for a very powerful and popular daily, the *Malayala Manorama*. Occasionally I give publicity to their work." Thottil has recently published a voluminous history of 264 Popes: the book, in Malayalam has already created a stir in the state. For, "I have written about honest and dishonest Popes," said the author.

"I have not hidden the scandals, specially the anecdotes in the lives of some of the lecherous Popes of the middle and renaissance ages who behaved like tribal chieftains." But the book is far from being soft pornography. "It also deals with the enormous problems faced by the papacy."Wryly he observes: "You ask me who the best Popes are? I'll say without any reservation that the earliest Popes are the greatest and best. That's because we know so very little about them."

Over the last five years there has been a steady worldwide exodus of nuns and priests from the church. "Celibacy is an extremely difficult ideal," says Thottil. "A large number of priests and nuns I've known somehow relieved themselves of sexual tension. Only a microscopic minority had the strength of character to be really celibate." But then he doesn't think that the Catholic Church will reverse its policy on celibacy in the near future.

Arthur Pais

Andhra Pradesh's expensive ministers

Hyderabad: Chief Minister Tanguturi Anjiah was visibly irked by the charges of the opposition that he was frequently visiting Delhi. The chief minister declared on the floor of the Assembly on 27 February that no chief minister could function without visiting Delhi. He added that he did not go there to relax in "Ashoka hotel or Akbar hotel" or to watch "dances" but to meet central leaders, officers and others with a view to seeking solutions to the various problems facing the state and its people. He stated that he had visited the capital only three or four times from 9 January to 9 February. A Janata Party legislator had, however, criticised the Andhra cabinet for spending half a crore rupees on trunk calls and telephone charges. Was it a fact that the tour expenses and telephone and trunk call charges of the Andhra ministers were higher in 1980-81, compared to 1979-80? Since the state faced economic and political crises all through 1980-81, what was the impact on the state's finances? The answers to these queries were provided by the finance minister, G. Rajaram, in the budget papers submitted in the state Legislature on 27 February. In 1979-80, a total of Rs 60 lakhs was spent on the council of ministers. Rs 60 lakhs were also provide for the council of ministers in the budget estimates of 1980-81. However, the revised estimate for 1980-81 shows an expenditure of Rs one crore on the council of ministers. In the budget estimates, it was assumed that the salaries of ministers would total Rs 18 lakhs in 1980-81 The revised figure stands at Rs 27.37 lakhs. Obviously, the number of ministers is higher than anticipated in the budget estimates. Provision of Rs 9.63 lakhs was made in the budget estimates for the tour expenses of the ministers. The figure has now been revised at Rs 24.33 lakhs. Why did the tour expenses rise so steeply? The answer is obvious. Many ministers, past or present, visited Delhi during the "critical" months on "official work" which was merely to save their "gaddis " The expenditure on telephone charges, maintenance of vehicles, electricity and water charges of the council of ministers was anticipated to be Rs 32.37 lakhs in the budget estimates. The new figure stands at Rs. 48.33 lakhs. The long distance calls could perhaps account for this abnormal rise in expenditure. For the fiscal year 1981-82, the state budget provided for a total expenditure of Rs 113.34 lakhs on the council of ministers. Salaries of ministers and deputy ministers would take away Rs 43 lakhs. Tour expenses would further go up and add upto Rs 30 lakhs. The expenditure on telephone charges and vehicle maintenance etc would go down . The explanatory memorandum on the budget, while offering the explanation for variations in the expenditure on council of ministers, records that "the increase in the revised estimate 1980-81 and budget estimate 1981-82 over budget estimate 1980-81 is due to provision of additional funds consequent on the increase in the *number* of ministers."

Syed Majeedul Hasan

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"I will not let my countrymen down"

Begum Hasina Sheikh Wazed, the 34-year-old eldest daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the former President of Bangladesh, was recently elected President of the Bangladesh Awami League, at a conference in Dacca between 14 and 16 February 1981. She was elected uncontested and in absentia for she has been living in Delhi since 25 August 1975, when she was granted political asylum by the government of India. She and her sister, Rehana, are the only two members of Sheikh Mujib's family to have escaped the bloody assassination of 15 August 1975 when all the family members of the former president were killed.

When **Saumitra Banerjee** *met her at her Pandara Road residence in Delhi, a meeting of the top functionaries of the Awami League was in progress. As all the rooms were occupied, the interview was conducted on the terrace and an apologetic Mrs Wazed said: "One should be careful about not offending the members of the press, but I am helpless. A historic meeting is in progress."*

Q: Why have you been chosen the president of the Bangladesh Awami League, in spite of the fact that you have been away from Bangladesh and have little or no political experience?

A: I have been made the president because I am Bangabandhu's (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's) daughter—and this is the only reason I am just a common girl, but the fact that I have been made the president of the Awami League is actually a reflection of the tremendous respect the people of Bangladesh have for Bangabandhu. This is just another way of showing their gratitude to a person who has done so much for the country. As his daughter, I symbolise all that he stood for. They (the people of Bangladesh) had received a lot of love and affection from my father They now expect the same love and affection from me. The honour (of being made the president of the Awami League) I have received, is actually another way of honouring Bangabandhu.

Q: What kind of political experience have you had in the past?

A: Ever since I was born I have been exposed to politics: I have closely followed all my father's political activities. I remember whenever my father went to jail, I used to prepare a cup of tea for him and pack his suit case before he was taken away. Politics is and always will be a part of my life. Besides, I was vice-president of the college union and had organised the Chhatra League. During the movement (Bangladesh's liberation struggle in 1971) I was very active. So, besides the exposure, I have also been involved actively in politics.

Q: What has the reaction been in Bangladesh to your election as president of the Awami League?

A: I have not seen it myself, but this is what has been told to me by people who frequently come to Delhi from Bangladesh They (the people who came to Delhi after Hasina Sheikh got elected) say that the councillors of the Awami League started crying when they heard that I had been elected. As for the common man, people like rickshaw pullers and other menial workers, they were so happy that they even distributed sweets among themselves, and some even prayed It is very difficult to express the joy I felt when I heard that the people of my country were so happy at my election.

Q: How did President Zia react to this?

A: There has been no immediate reaction, but he has always been harassing people from the Awami League. He has arrested many of our workers and has also murdered a large number of them—some secretly and some openly. He has been trying for a long time now to break up the party but has not been successful because the party has a mass base.

Q: How popular is the Awami League now?

A: It is the only popular party in Bangladesh. It has its roots in the villages, which no other party can boast of. We have the support of the common man, the people who matter, not just a few people at the top.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: My father had always fought for the rights of the people, to better the conditions of the masses, and to drive away poverty from the lives of the people In short, to, remove sorrow from the lives of the people in our country. That is what I want to do. If I achieve this, then only will I feel that I have done something for the people of my country, that I have completed my task. This is also what the people of the country expect from me and I will not let them down

Q. When do you plan to go to Bangladesh?

A: Soon But the date has not been fixed as yet. You see, I have been staying here (Delhi) for a very long time and I must clear up a lot of things before I leave. Besides, my children are small and are studying. So some arrangements have to be made before I leave and this will take some time.

Begum Hasina Wazed

Q: Where were you at the time of the 1975 coup in Bangladesh, when Bangabandhu was assassinated?

A: On that day (15 August), I was in Belgium. But at the end of July 1975 I had left Bangladesh for West Germany, where my husband was working. After the incident, I came to Delhi on 25 August, when the government of India gave me and my family political asylum.

Q: Could the Indian government have anticipated the coup and saved Bangabandhu?

A: What has happened has happened. I would not like to comment.

Q: What do you think about the present Indo-Bangladesh relations?

A: There is a lot of room for improvement. India and Bangladesh should have better relations as India helped Bangladesh during the independence movement. Not just that, India has been helping Bangladesh subsequently also. Besides, we are a poor country. How can we fight with other countries. We have to be friendly with all countries.

Q: What are your present tasks?

A: The first thing that has to be done is to punish all those involved in the incident of 15 August 1975. A commission had been set up to look into the incident, but the members were not allowed to enter the country. Again, all those who were guilty have been given diplomatic assignments and comfortable jobs. The first thing that I demand is justice.

Q: Has there been any communication between you and the Indian government since you were elected?

A: No. Why should that happen? This is an internal affair of our country, so there is no reason why the government of India should react.

Q: What are your views about the present government in Bangladesh?

A: Actually, I cannot comment on this as I shall have to consult the members of the presidium before I say anything. We have a very democratic way of functioning in our party. There are twelve members of the presidium and they together decide policies and the line the party has to adopt ■

Beethoven's homosexual affairs

Current research has thrown new light on the maestro's personality, says Kishore Chatterjee

Beethoven

For most people who love Beethoven's music and know a little about his life, Karl Beethoven, his nephew, will always be that "wretched Karl," a good for nothing boy who made the last 12 years of the composer's life miserable with endless lawsuits, quarrels, intrigues and even an attempted suicide. Successive generations of biographers have dismissed this relationship as Beethoven's final folly, the mental aberration of a mighty spirit.

In fact Anton Schindler, Beethoven's secretary and lifelong friend, the man chiefly responsible for the romantic *Moonlight Sonata* image of the composer, went so far as to destroy the conversation books relating to the subject of Karl. (Beethoven being totally deaf towards the end of his life had to use pen and paper to carry on even daily conversations.) Schindler was possibly motivated by shock and the fear of the world discovering an aspect of Beethoven totally unlike the romantic image he was building up in his biography.

But modern researchers have proved conclusively, that far from being a folly, Beethoven's last and perhaps greatest love affair was totally in keeping with his character, the long repressed craving of a lonely bachelor for love and intimacy with at least one human being, responsible as much for his silent period (1812-1817—during which he was fighting in court to gain custody of Karl and for which the world has never forgiven the boy) as it was for his profound last period, of the *Ninth Symphony*, the *Missa Solemnis* and the *Last Quartets*, music that speak of a peace beyond understanding.

Karl Beethoven came into the master's life when the great composer was 45, a very famous and very lonely man, almost totally deaf and isolated from the world desperately, almost unconsciously, seeking a spark that would set off his superhuman creative capabilities. This spark or spiritual crisis was necessary for Beethoven's psyche for his greatest moments, His magnificent Middle Period which saw the birth of the *Eroica*, the *Fifth Symphony* and *Pastoral* amongst others in a row had followed his desperate struggle against deafness, an act of God he could not comprehend. And now he was to face his second great spiritual crisis, his uncontrollable longing for possessing the boy Karl, body and soul. It was a dramatic clash between a genius and a boy. Sometimes the genius was loving and indulgent, sometimes he reared up and became terrible in his greatness, standing up to the boy whose strength lay only in his youth, his beauty and his lack of love. Beethoven wrote, "I was never so great as when I brought my nephew to me and busied myself with his education—through my nephew I wish to raise a new monument to my name."

Carl Beethoven

Of course in the true spirit of a confirmed loner and a clumsy lover he went about the conquest of Karl like a drunk bull in a china shop. The first to fall was Karl's father who died leaving the boy in the custody of Beethoven and his mother. Beethoven who by now was totally paranoid, suspecting everything and everyone was convinced that his brother had been poisoned by his wife and insisted on an autopsy. He then went to fight a long drawn-out legal battle for the custody of Karl, snatching the boy away ultimately from his mother, whom Beethoven disliked more than any other person with the hatred of a lover for a rival.

He ultimately got the boy, his companionship, his physical nearness, but never his love. For the boy could never forgive Beethoven for snatching him away from his mother. Because of this, Beethoven's nephew was his profoundest emotional experience and the greatest tragedy of his life. On July 20 1820, Beethoven finally won the case, and a reluctant Karl, then a boy of 14, came to live in his famous uncle's house, confused and scared and more than a little afraid of his strange uncle, for whom this young and beautiful body like a Michaelangelo sculpture had become a living form, more real than a symphony, more scintillating than a concerto, more pathetic than a sonata.

Almost without exception Beethoven's biographers have blamed Karl for what followed, without realising that for a young boy and late man (Karl was 21 when Beethoven died) of ordinary sensitivity, with interest in mischief, wine, women and cards, living with Beethoven must have been torture worse than death. Karl confessed later in court after his unsuccessful attempt at suicide, that he grew steadily worse because his uncle wanted him to get better. For Beethoven, Karl was no ordinary boy, but an act of God, the supreme sacrifice to his altar of creativity. "May God hear my prayer," wrote Beethoven, "allow me to live only with my boy Karl." Beethoven made him learn the piano and insisted he prayed regularly.

Even musically Karl was unlucky, for his uncle's music had long left the romantic pathway of the *Violin Concerto* and had entered its final, incomprehensible spiritual period. As Beethoven's music moved into regions of consciousness to which no music before or after him has travelled, his daily habits became more and more impossible. He was now totally deaf, intensely suspicious and completely paranoid about threats and obsessive visions concerning Karl. Poor Beethoven was always afraid of losing the only living object that he had ever truly loved.

He not only watched over Karl's studies but tried to be guardian of his heart and sexuality. "For the love of you I am the button of your trousers," he wrote in his conversation books. Karl's reply is not recorded but the fact that he ran away again from Beethoven and confessed later in court that his uncle, once in rage had dragged him away from a chair and hurt him 'in the most delicate place' proves beyond doubt that Beethoven's jealousy sometimes made him act on impluse that he later regretted. "Sensual enjoyment without a union of soul is and will remain a bestial act," he wrote in his diary. Beethoven always loved the boy's body, but what pained and tortured him was that he was pretty sure that the boy never did. Here is an excerpt from one of Beethoven's letters after their typical and frequent quarrels, Karl sulking and staying away, Beethoven only too ready to forget and forgive. "Come into my arms, you shall have no harsh words there. Do not abandon yourself to your misery. For the love of God come home today. From me you can expect the most loving care and help. Come, come then to my faithful heart..."

There was only one logical end to this disastrous love affair. Karl, desperate and utterly bored by Beethoven's overpowering possessiveness tried to kill himself. He was rushed to hospital and from there to court, and Beethoven's name linked with Karl in a manner that left no doubt about their relationship. Beethoven was grief-stricken and aged almost 20 years overnight. He, of course, forgave Karl, saying it was his "mother's blood after all," and moved with Karl to his brother Johann's estate in Gneixendorf to play out the final postcript to the affair. Beethoven was now poor but still he refused to touch the legacy he had kept aside for Karl. On the contrary he tried to persuade Johann to leave his money and estate to Karl, naturally without success for by then everyone had written off Beethoven as being insane with love. In fact Johann's refusal to take a love-me-love-my-dog attitude to Karl made Beethoven leave the estate in a huff in bitterly cold December.

An excerpt from a conversation book reveals the attitude of the adult Karl, whose life with this wild man had lost every spark of gratitude and to whom Beethoven's affection was growing unendurable. It was the end of their stay at Gneixendorf, Beethoven is trying to persuade Karl to return with him to Vienna. The words are Karl's. "If you want to go good, if not good again. But I entreat you once more not to torment me as you are doing. You might regret it. For I can endure much, but not too much. You must remember that other poeple are also human beings...I only want to be alone for a little while. Will you not let me go to my room?"

On the journey back to Vienna, Beethoven caught a severe chill. One complication led to another and within three months Beethoven was dead. A few months before his death Karl had left home to join the army. He never saw Beethoven alive again and in fact arrived too late for the funeral.

It is easy to dismiss Beethoven's love for his nephew as an outburst of latent homosexuality. In so far as his greatest love was of the same sex it could be termed that. In a way everything that had happened to Beethoven before Karl entered his life, had logically led him to the last act. It was typical of Beethoven, the loner, that the only living object he ever wanted to possess completely body and soul should be totally beyond his reach. But then, wasn't he also the musician who was stone deaf? ■

Men around the maestro

Carl Holz

Gerhard von Breuning

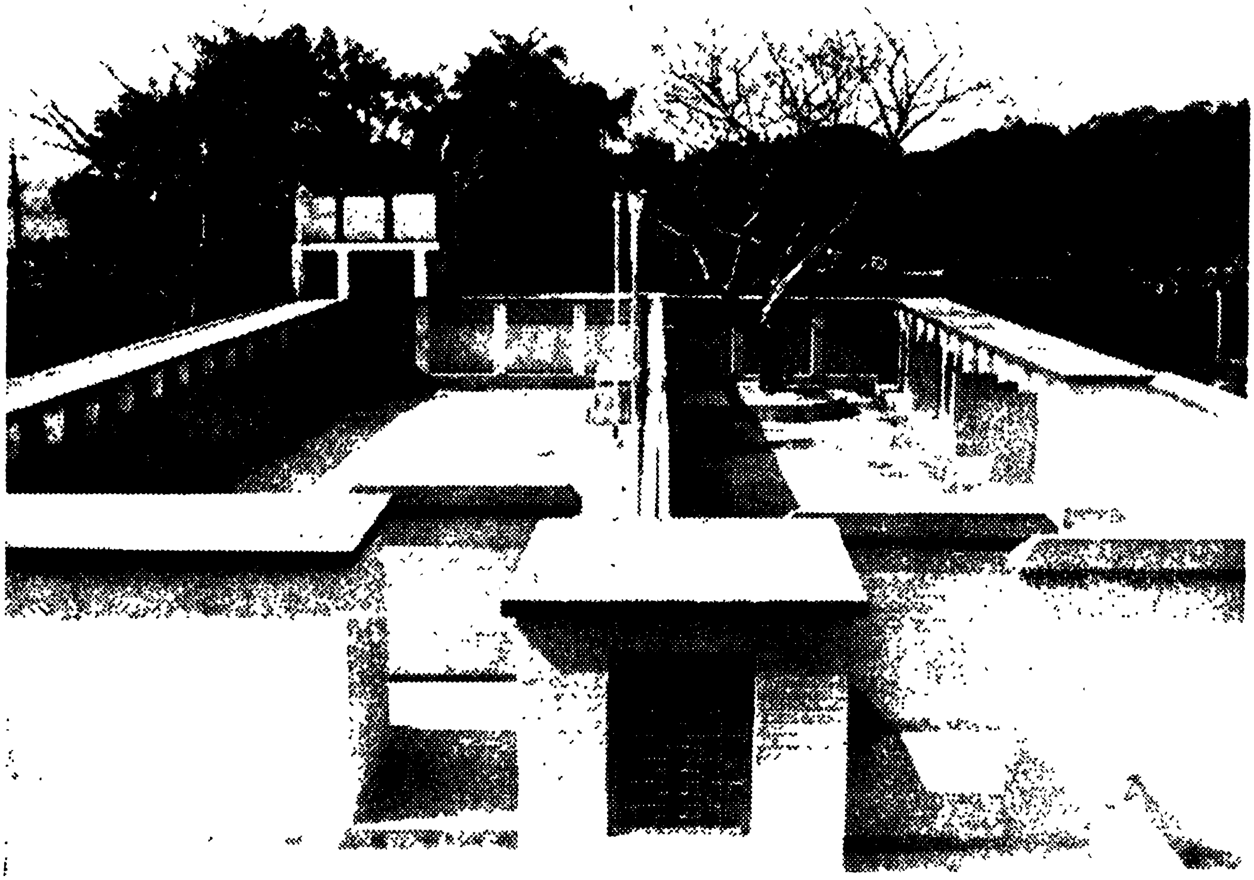
Anton Schindler

There is no doubt that the man who wrote the Moonlight Sonata and has the popular image of the romantic bachelor with an 'immortal beloved' tucked away in every palace bedroom was in fact much more at home in male company. Beethoven was in fact very much a man's man. This was not entirely because he got into his head that his deafness was due to syphilis and forced a life of celibacy upon himself. It's just that his angularities, his mounting paranoia and uncouth, dirty habits could only be tolerated by men who forgave the facade for the fundamentals. Beethoven's greatest experiences have been centred around men. After his first discovery of deafness, Beethoven wrote a prose poem called *The Heiligenstadt Testament*, comparable in its morbidity to Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*. He dedicated it to his two brothers Carl and Johann, who were incapable of understanding its sentiments. Beethoven hated both his sisters-in-law and missed no opportunity to poison his brothers against the wives.

Apart from Karl, his most intimate moments were shared by a young cellist called Carl Holz, referred to as "Mephistopheles" by Beethoven's admirers for having dragged the composer down the the evil path. Beethoven had a life long love-hate relationship with Anton Schindler, his first biographer. Schindler claimed that he knew Beethoven more intimately than any woman. Beethoven longed for the company of young boys. He became extremely fond of Gerhard the 12-year-old son of his friend Stephen Von Breuning, whom he nicknamed "trouser button". In his last days when his wild and uncouth manners had driven everyone away, a young peasant boy Michael Krenn kept Beethoven company and has left an interesting account of how the master composed his last quartets.

Ironically, none of the men Beethoven loved were at his bedside to close his eyes on 26 March 1827. It was a woman who performed that rite, his ancient lifelong enemy, sister-in-law Therese.

“Sulabh” in Calcutta



The Second and third units of public toilets and bathing complexes are ready at Rabindra Sarobar area in Calcutta.

The first unit at Deshbandhu Park is being used by over one thousand men and women daily and regularly. On payment of 10 P. they are entitled to use the sanitary facilities and the bathing complexes. This is the least a city can do for the floating population and the underprivileged. Calcutta has done it.

The Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) in co-operation with Sulabh International will set up many more such public toilets and bathing complexes all over the city.

The units at Rabindra Sarobar with about 70 toilets, 20 urinals and 20 bathing places will help thousands of residents of the Lake area everyday.

We thank Sulabh International and the Calcutta Improvement Trust.

Public Relations Directorate,
Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority,
3A, Auckland Place, Calcutta-700 017

THE WORLD

Tarzan under fire

Richard Harris

V. R. Nanayakkar, Sri Lanka's conservator of forest, will soon declare war on Tarzan. He is planning to sue Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) for causing damage to virgin jungle near Kandy where the Hollywood-based film company is shooting a Tarzan film. Mr Nanayakkar is hoping to get Rs 300,000 as compensation. The film stars British actor Richard Harris as Tarzan and America's latest sex symbol Bo Derek as Jane.

Bo Derek

Trial in Turkey

Professor Necmettin Erbakan, former deputy Prime Minister of Turkey and leader of the ultra-Islamic National Salvation Party (NSP), will soon be put on trial along with 33 fellow partymen on charges of attempting to establish a theocracy in Turkey The NSP was founded in 1972 and obtained less than 12 per cent of the votes in the 1973 elections and 8 per cent in 1977. Professor Erbakan had made no secret of his distaste for the secular legacy of modern Turkey's founder, Kemal Ataturk; he made no effort to come to terms with the republic If convicted, Erbakan may face up to 36 years in prison

US Nazi housewife

Mrs Hermine Ryan, before her extradition to West Germany, where she is now facing charges of war crimes, was born in Vienna. She married an American in 1958 and lived in New York till 1973. During World War II she worked as a guard at the Majdanek concentration camp in occupied Poland where, according to a recent claim by a West German prosecutor, she "was one of the best-known and best-noted overseers." According to testimony presented at a Dusseldorf court on 24 February this year, Mrs Ryan had served in four Nazi concentration camps between 1939 and 1945. She was known to the inmates as "the stamping mare" because of her habit of trampling prisoners with steel-studded boots.

Spectacular jail-break

The most spectacular jail-break in recent history took place at Fleqrymerogis prison in France on 28 February this year. A helicopter, hijacked by two unidentified men from a heliport at Issy les Moulineau, landed in the centre of the prison, picked up two convicts and flew away. Prison guards sounded the alarm, police helicopters took off instantly and what followed was almost a hair-raising sequence from a Hollywood thriller. But the "cops-and-robbers chase" did not last long; the hijacked chopper disappeared and was later found near a Paris suburb. The prisoners and their two rescuers had vanished

More of the Shah

Shah's estate building

Part of the former Shah of Iran's vast property, including a private airport in Surrey (England), has been sold for two million dollars. This money will soon be handed over to widow Farah and eldest son Reza Pehalvi.

Pakistan's nuclear agents

Three citizens of Montreal (Canada) were put on trial at Quebec's sessions court on 27 February on charges of illegally shipping electronic equipment to enrich uranium in Pakistan. Judge Gilbert Monier ordered the accused to return on 28 April for further hearings.

Lennon's fortune

The late pop star John Lennon's total assets in England and Wales have been valued at $ 1.3 million which is actually just a fraction of his total fortune. By conservative estimates, his widow Yoko Ono and 18-year-old-son Julian will inherit something to the tune of $ 275 million.

Sextuplets?

Controversy surrounds the widely-publicised birth of healthy sextuplets to Mrs Charmaine Craig of Windhoek (South Africa). The two Johannesburg papers which reported the births, claimed that the sixth child was born 23 days after the other five because Mrs Craig was suffering from gynaecological problems. But, when a reporter visited her subsequently, Mrs Craig told him: "Please... I cannot say where they (the sextuplets) are... I don't know. You must ask someone who knows." So everyone is in a fix about the six.

Making sense in Iran

"Tomorrow will be too late," said Ayatollah Khomeini's son, Ahmad, in a written appeal for tolerance to the Iranian Majlis (Parliament) recently. His letter was prompted by the incidents of violence on the Caspian Sea coast on 14 February: Islamic extremists, armed with knives, sticks, pistols and rifles, disrupted a rally led by Majlis deputy Hassan Lahuti, fired at his car and held him prisoner for two hours. It was another showdown between the Islamic fundamentalists and the followers of President Bani-sadr. Severely critical of Islamic militants in his letter, Ahmad Khomeini referred to them as "club-wielders" and added, "If you do not stamp out club-wielding today, tomorrow will be too late." The term "club-wielder" in Iran is usually reserved for members of the Hezbollah (party of god) group, which frequently resorts to violence against those Iranians who are not "sufficiently Islamic" in their beliefs.

Ahmad Khomeini

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GOOD NEWS

Another feather

Mrinal Sen added another feather to his already crowded cap on 24 February this year: his film *Akaler Shandhaney* (In search of famine) India's official competitive entry to the 31st Berlin International Film Festival, was honoured with the special jury prize of the Silver Bear. Besides the Silver Bear, the film also won the International Protestant Film Jury (INTERFILM) award of 1,500 DM and the International Catholic Film Organisation award for its "humanitarian approach." Present at the prizegiving ceremony at Zoo Palast were the film's producer D. K. Chakraborty, and lead players Smita Patil and Dhritiman *Chatterjee*. *Akaler Shandhaney* has yet to be commercially released in India; it was, however, included in the Indian panorama at the eighth film fete in Delhi this year.

Mrinal Sen directing Akaler Shandhaney

CHITRAJIT GHOSH

Controlled price

Perhaps the best part of finance minister Venkatraman's budget proposals is the indication that controlled cloth prices will not be allowed to go up. Controlled cloth, used primarily by the weaker sections will be subsidised by the additional excise duty of 10-15 per cent on all textiles. This means the better-off consumer will have to foot the subsidy which textile manufacturers will pass on to the consumer. The self-financing of the controlled cloth scheme was started by George Fernandes in 1978 when he was union minister for industries. The revenue from would meet the expenditure incurred by way of subsidy on controlled cloth. With Mr Venkataraman's additional 10-15 per cent levy, the provision for subsidy would rise to nearly Rs 100 crores, netting around Rs 33 crores to help finance the increased outlay oncontrolled cloth. The average cost of production of controlled cloth is calculated to be Rs 3.92 per metre. The government provides a subsidy of Rs 1.92 per metre, enabling the sale of controlled cloth to consumers at Rs two per metre on an average.

Keeping well

Daljit Singh (40), formerly Bihar's and East Zone's agile man behind the stumps, is doing commendable work—outside the cricket field. He is the manager for community development and social welfare and secretary of the rural development society of Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), Jamshedpur. His organisations have undertaken projects all around the steel city to uplift the tribals and other depressed sections. Singh is conducting rural projects of agricultural extension, animal husbandry, village and cottage industries, horticulture, forestry and other welfare activities including health and family planning in 150 villages in the Singbhum district on a five-year budget of Rs 1.5 crore. The most interesting of these projects is an "action plan for communal harmony"—a necessity in Jamshedpur, which saw an ugly communal holocaust in 1979. Men, women and children from all communities are invited to programmes like *Id-Deepawali milan, Samuday milan, Id-Rakhi milan and Id-Dussehera milan* where they play ingenious games whose lessons are clear: no results are possible without love and cooperation.

Seeing through dust

Three scientists of the Institute of Science, Bombay have successfully used simple gadgets for gauging dust pollution. This is the second triumph for Dr S. B. Chapekar, Associate Professor of Ecology, D. B. Boralkar and Mr R. P. Shetya who had earlier successfully used simple garden plants to determine the geographical distribution and intensity of industrial pollution in Bombay.

Their three-year quest with polythene cups, polythene beakers and glass plates blossomed into a scientific breakthrough which confirmed that these simple tools were reliable instruments for estimating dust pollution, a growing menace in many cities.

In addition to these tools, the scientists experimented painstakingly with the use of plants for the first time in India as agents for monitoring pollution. According to one report, few leaves were collected from garden plants and washed and dried clean with a filter paper. They were then placed horizontally and allowed to capture gravitationally falling cement dust dispersed in the air through blowers. After the dust was allowed to settle for a while, the leaves were carefully washed into a beaker with a jet of distilled water. The scientists found that the amount of dustfall on leaves was slightly higher than in the controls and differed among themselves. Even under field conditions such differences were noticeable. With the readings, widely varying the scientists had to find out why this was so. Experiments continued on three species of plants namely, Thespesea Populnea, Croton and Merabilis Jalapar. Prolonged investigation revealed that when the horizontal leaf was suspended vertically, some of the captured dust was lost by the leaf surfaces giving low value of captured dustfall. It was also seen that Mirabilis leaves showed a tendency for higher dust-capture while Thespesea leaves showed the highest retention of dust and Croton leaves lost the maximum amount of dust that had fallen on them. With a further study of these results the scientists finally arrived at the kind of leaf that would be best suited to to monitor dust pollution.

KHAAS BAAT

DURGAPRASAD

Ranjeeta: spaced out?

One star who buckled under the filmi pressure is *Ranjeeta*. The only student of the FTII to be offered a film while still in the institute did not get much by way of special treatment on the sets. Who did she turn to? Well apparently chivalry was on the wane, so the poor girl turned to drugs and drinks, which perhaps account for her slurry speech and out-of-focus eyes.

Dara Singh's latest find, *Binny Rak* is drawing a lot of wows. Whether she can act or not, is of course an entirely different question. But then, who said Dara needs good actresses for the films he produces. For all his Punjabi films—most of them superhits—he had only very pretty heroines like *Vimi* and *Komilla Wirk*. And now its Binny Rak from London who has been chosen for Dara's new venture *Rustom*, probably inspired by Muhammad Ali's *The Greatest*. She might turn out to be a lucky girl provided her un-Indian looks and Anglicised style does not buckle under the local filmi pressures.

By the look of things, *Shailendra Singh*—he made his debut as a singer in *Bobby* and later took to acting—plans to join the wrestlers. With the amount of weight and muscles that he has acquired, he is no longer the same chocolate-pudding man he used to be. We only hope that his petite Bengali wife, *Mridula Bose*, has no hand in it.

Male directors beware! Your realm is slowly being invaded by women. Since *Sashi Kapoor* gave a break to *Aparna Sen* to direct the all-female cast film *36 Chowringhee Lane*, *Simi* is now declaring she wants to direct a film. Who knows what that will turn out to be? Let's keep our fingers crossed, the film might be a very artistic one indeed.

Zeenat has adopted this famous stance of hers. Nowadays she feigns indifference whenever someone comes to tell her about her affairs with all the eligible and good-looking men who woo her. Poor Zeenat what else can she do? For there are some people who come to her with stories about her ex-husband, *Sanjay*. But I cannot understand why these heartless people want to torture our girl Zeenat. Don't they realise that she has had enough of sadness in her life.

Zeenat:a still from Pyaas

TAPAS ROY

Rekha:eyeing the beautiful?

Rekha is on the prowl. She has now put none other than the handsome sarod maestro *Amjad Ali Khan* on her radar. And people concerned are hoping that all is well on the musician's home front, for the way Rekha wraps herself around his aura while he performs and the way he looks at her during his performance make people think he is only playing for her. And Rekha's reasons are good: her self-confessed weakness for beautiful people. Poor Rekha, doesn't she know that the maestro is happily married?

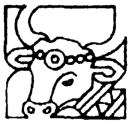
The *Bachchans*, we mean that famous duo *Jaya* and *Amitabh*, have come out of their shells. They had almost been forgotten for they were hardly ever seen in public as the loving couple they used to be. Whether Amitabh was too busy is not known. But now they can be seen around town. He-man Bachchan has dug out his famous churidars and the expensive shawl and Jaya is once again the happy lady she used to be. She no longer looks gaunt and scared. We hope this loving relationship is not a show to be kept up till the *Silsila* hoardings appear.

Hema Malini is not going to let people forget her so easily. After husband *Dharmendra's* much talked of activities as director and producer, Hema is all set to show the film industry that she is equal to her husband, if not better than him. Hema is now planning to direct her own movie.

Beginning 15 March

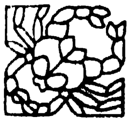
This week the Sun and Mars are in Pisces, Mercury is in Aquarius, Jupiter and Saturn are in Virgo, Rahu is in Cancer and Ketu is in Capricorn. The Moon will be moving through Cancer, Leo and Virgo from Gemini.

Aries (15 April—14 May). The first two days of this week are particularly favourable for you. You will make steady progress on your professional front. Domestic affairs are well signified as well. Financially you will stand to gain substantially. However, you may get into disputes with your partner or those in authority. You are advised to be cautious in both written and spoken word. **Good dates:** 15, 17 and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) You must be very careful while settling accounts this week. You will benefit unexpectedly through the good offices of friends and relatives. The time is particularly favourable for business expansion Do not hesitate to take bold decisions However, your health will cause anxiety and you may incur medical expense as a result. Do not keep work pending. **Good dates:** 16, 18 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.

GEMINI (15 June—14 July) A person in authority may prove helpful to you. You may be required to flatter someone for your own benefit. The time is particularly favourable for young people and technicians. You may have to seek government aid if you are an entrepreneur. Progress is signified on your professional front. However, financial gains will only be moderate this week. Do not lose your temper. **Good dates:** 15, 20 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



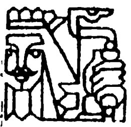
CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week brings with it ample opportunities for business expansion; do not fritter these away. The time is particularly favourable for competing against others. Your domestic front will be peaceful and the source of inspiration and happiness. Love affairs are well signified. Letters will bring good things. If you fall ill, do not hesitate to seek and act upon expert medical advice. **Good dates:** 16, 19 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable Direction:** East.

LEO (15 August—14 September) Relatives will contribute to your happiness this week. You will enjoy their company. However, you might find yourself under mental strain Friends may betray you. On your professional front, problems will be solved without much effort. The time is particularly favourable for marraige negotiations and love affairs. You are advised not to take risks. **Good dates:** 17, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.

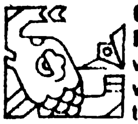
VIRGO (15 September—14 October) You may find yourself in the midst of family problems this week. However, the time is favourable for those who are seeking employment. You will benefit through the good offices of strangers. A secret matter, very close to your heart, will make steady progress. Do not involve yourself in illegal monetary transactions despite temptations.**Good dates:** 16 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North-west.

LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Success will not come your way easily this week. You will waste more time on unofficial work. You might suffer irreparable damage because of your lawyer. Your salary might increase. You may also have to shoulder responsibilities.The time is particularly favourable for attempting new ventures and making amends for the past. Do not be irrational. **Good dates:** 18, 19 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.

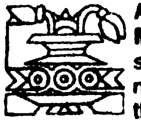
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) If you do not take proper care of your health this week, you are in for a total physical breakdown. The time is favourable for intellectuals and those connected with the arts. You will enjoy the company of a special person. Your friends and acquaintances will cause anxiety to you. Matters related to property and insurance will be easily solved. Do not take risks. **Good dates:** 17, 19 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.



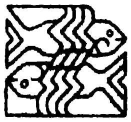
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Love affairs might upset you this week. The behaviour of children will also cause anxiety. Financially you may not be too happy. Young men with technical qualifications will be presented with new employment opportunities. The time is particularly favourable for intellectual and creative pursuits. You are advised to stay clear of disputes and controversies. **Good dates:** 15, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North-west.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 March) You will be plagued with quite unnecessary worries this week. A particular incident at home might also cause anxiety. Your enemies will lunch fresh conspiracies against you. Love and matrimonial affairs will make steady progress. Your subordinates may not be very cooperative. You are advised to study situations and developments very carefully. **Good dates:** 15, 16 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 3 and 6. **Favourable direction:** South.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) The health of your spouse or a family member may cause anxiety to you this week. The success of children close to you will make you both proud and happy. A sticky and pending problem may continue to embarrass you. Letters from distant friends and relatives will bring good tidings. You are advised not to neglect your work which demands close attention. **Good dates:** 16, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) You will gain financially this week. A journey may prove helpful to you. The behaviour and attitude of one of your family members will cause anxiety to you. However, progress on your professional front is signified. Those born around midday will gain substantially through speculation. Others are advised against taking unnecessary risks this week. **Good dates:** 17, 19 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-east.

Political forecast for 1981: The super powers will try to increase their spheres of influence in West Asia. As a result their will be political ncertainty. Israel and the Jewish people will be troubled due to uncertain conditions. There will be political uneasiness in Egypt and resident Sadat might have to face a coup. The cordial relations between Egypt and Israel will continue. There might be trouble between bya and Syria. As long as Ayatollah Khomeini holds the reins of power in Iran, the war between Iraq and Iran will continue. However, omeini might have to step down before 1982. There might be earthquakes in Iran and Turkey.

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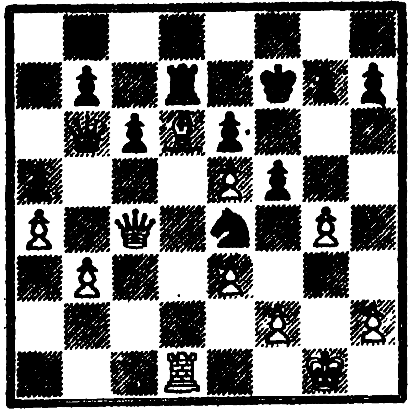
chess

Kuzmin (Black) to move



Velikov (White)
Position after White's 25th move

Game of the month

A bishop is stronger than a knight, but queen and knight are better than queen and bishop. So much for the arithmetic of chess. The apparent anomaly occurs because, although in most positions a bishop really is more useful than a knight, it just happens that queen and knight co-operate so well together. All of which leads to a strategy well worth trying from time to time, particularly with Black. The idea is to give up the 'advantage' of the two bishops in the opening and then by carefully planned exchanges try to simplify to a queen and knight versus queen and bishop situation I give an example in which this idea works to perfection, mainly because nobody told the player of the white pieces what the player of the black pieces was trying to do.

White: Velikov (Bulgaria). Black: Kuzmin (USSR)
Nimzo-Indian Defence. Jugoslavia 1980.

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—K3; 3. N—QB3, B—N5; 4. Q—B2, N—B3; 5. N—B3, P—Q4; an old and almost forgotten move. More usual is 5. . . P—Q3 intending a later . . . P—K4.

6. P—QR3, B x N+ 7, Q x B, N—K5; 8. Q—B2, O—O; 9. P—K3, P—QR4; 10. B—Q3, P—B4; Black is now playing a Dutch Defence where he has gained some time but given up his valuable KB.

11. P—QN3, B—Q2; 12. B—N2, Q—K1; 13. N—K5? Playing into Black's hands. He should avoid exchanging these knights.

13. . . N x N; 14. P x N, B—B3; 15. O—O. Not perceiving the danger. He could eat humble pie and play for a draw with 15. B x N.

15. . . P x P; 16. B x P, 16. P x P, N—B4 is equally unpleasant.

16. . . B—N4! The key move. Black trades bishops to bring about his desired Q+N versus Q+B set-up.

17. B x B, Q x B; 18. P—QR4, Or 18. Q x P, QR—B1; 19. Q—K7, R—KB2; 20. Q—R4, Q x P and Black is well in command.

18. . . Q—N3; 19. B—R3, KR—Q1; 20. KR—Q1, P—B3; 21. QR—B1. A waste of time. Better 21. B—Q6 although he evidently did not like the look of the reply 21. . . P—B4 forcing the bishop to move again.

21. . . R x R+ 22. R x R, R—Q1; 23. B—Q6, R—Q2; 24. Q—B4, K—B2; Black's advantage is clear. The BQ6 is merely a target liable to be surrounded and Black's knight is much more flexible. White's next move compounds his problems.

25. P—KN4?

DIAGRAM

25. . . . Q—Q1!! 26. Q—Q4 or 26. P x P, Q—N4+ 27. K—B1, Q x BP and White cannot defend KB2 viz. 28. Q—B2, N—N6+ and 29. . . Q x Q, or 28. Q—K2, N—B6.

26 . . . Q—R5; 27. P x P, Q x BP+ 28. K—R1, Q—B6+ 29. K—N1, Q—N5+ 30. K—B1, Not 30. K—R1, N—B7 mate. **30. . . Q x P+ 31. K—K2, Q—N5+ 32. K—K1, Q—N8+ 33. K—K2, Q x RP+** and White resigned in view of 34. K—B3, Q—N6+ 35. K x N, Q—N5+ 36. K—Q3, Q x R+.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

This deal from the Club Mediterranean festival of bridge in Guadeloupe led to the kind of 'hassle' that has become so familiar in the upper, and even middle, reaches of tournament play.

Dealer, West. N-S vulnerable

West		East
	♠ Q J 10 ♥ Q 6 5 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A Q 9 8 4	
♠ 9 6 ♥ J 9 8 4 ♦ Q J 10 5 4 3 ♣ 10	N W E S	♠ K 8 ♥ A ♦ A K 9 6 ♣ J 7 6 5 3 2
	♠ A 7 5 4 3 2 ♥ K 10 7 3 2 ♦ 2 ♣ K	

This was the bidding, with Eddie Kantar South and Bobby Goldman North:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	3♦	No	5♦ (1)
No(2)	No	dble(3)	No
5♠	No	No	No

(1) Players are supposed to say 'skip bid' whenever a jump bid of this sort is made. The next player is then obliged to pause awhile before calling. East omitted to give the warning.

(2) Difficult, you will agree; South had to think before passing.

(3) Not unreasonable in a pairs tournament, where you have to fight for small gains.

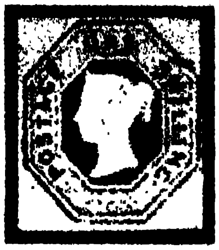
When the dummy went down, the opponents lodged a protest on the grounds that North had reopened after South had made a 'slow pass . In such circumstances the hand is nevertheless played out. On the lead of ♣ 10 South won in dummy, picked up the trumps, crossed to dummy with a third trump, and discarded ♦ 2 on ♣ Q. A low heart brought forth the lone Ace, and Kantar made his contract for the loss of two hearts.

The appeals committee ruled that North did not take a '70 per cent action', in the sense that it could not be said with assurance that 70 per cent of all experts would have doubled Five Diamonds. The result was adjusted to Five Diamonds undoubled, down one (It looks to be two down on reasonable defence.)

On the test applied, I think this was a fair ruling, except for one thing – East's failure to 'alert'. The object of this procedure is to give an opponent time to consider his action without giving anything away. It seems to me that, since he failed to alert, East forfeited his right to claim a foul.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



Although registration for letters at a fee of one shilling was introduced in 1841, the service was so little used that the Post Office did not issue the appropriate 1s stamps until 1847 They were embossed one at a time in sheets of 20, so that the spaces between them were irregular and sometimes the impressions even overlapped As a result, stamps with clear margins are very scarce, *especially in mint condition* Another reason for the scarcity of the stamps is that six months after their issue the Post Office reduced the registration fee to 6d Although they could be used on letters to the United States and some remote British colonies, many of the 1s stamps remained unsold and were destroyed This example, in fine mint condition, realised £1,650 recently at Sotheby's.

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. Who was the creator of *In the Fields, The Loom* and *The Potato Eaters*?
2 He won the Nobel prize for literature in 1947 *Prometheus Misbound, The Coiners* and *The Pastoral Symphony* are among his works. What is his name?
3 What is foam glass?
4. What is the early Archaic period in history?
5. Where would you find the Gulf of Chihli?

ANSWERS

1. Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), the greatest Dutch painter after Rembrandt.
2. Andre Gide, born on 22 November 1869, a controversial figure all his life and one of the most notable writers of his time.
3. Also known as synthetic lava, it is made in moulds from a mixture of ground glass and carbon. It is heated to form a mass of thin-walled bubbles that can be easily sawed and it is used as an insulator.
4. The early Archaic period refers to the period from the disintegration (c. 1200 BC) of the Bronze Age civilisation in Greece to the beginning of the literary and cultural revival of the Archaic period proper (c 750-500 BC).
5 In China. The gulf is noteworthy because it recieves the water of the Yellow River, which has the largest sediment discharge in the world

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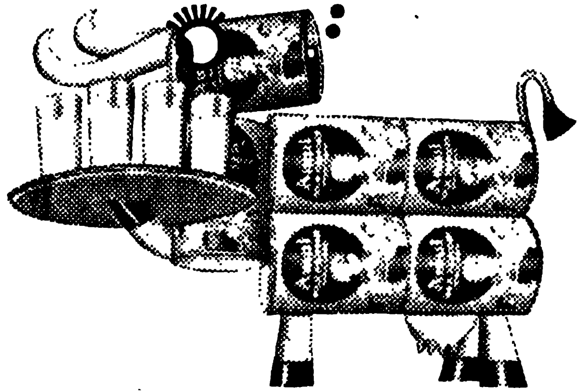

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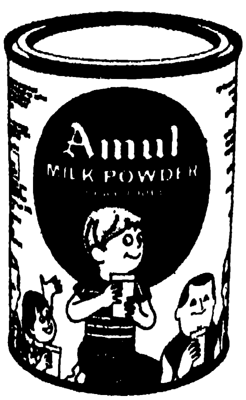

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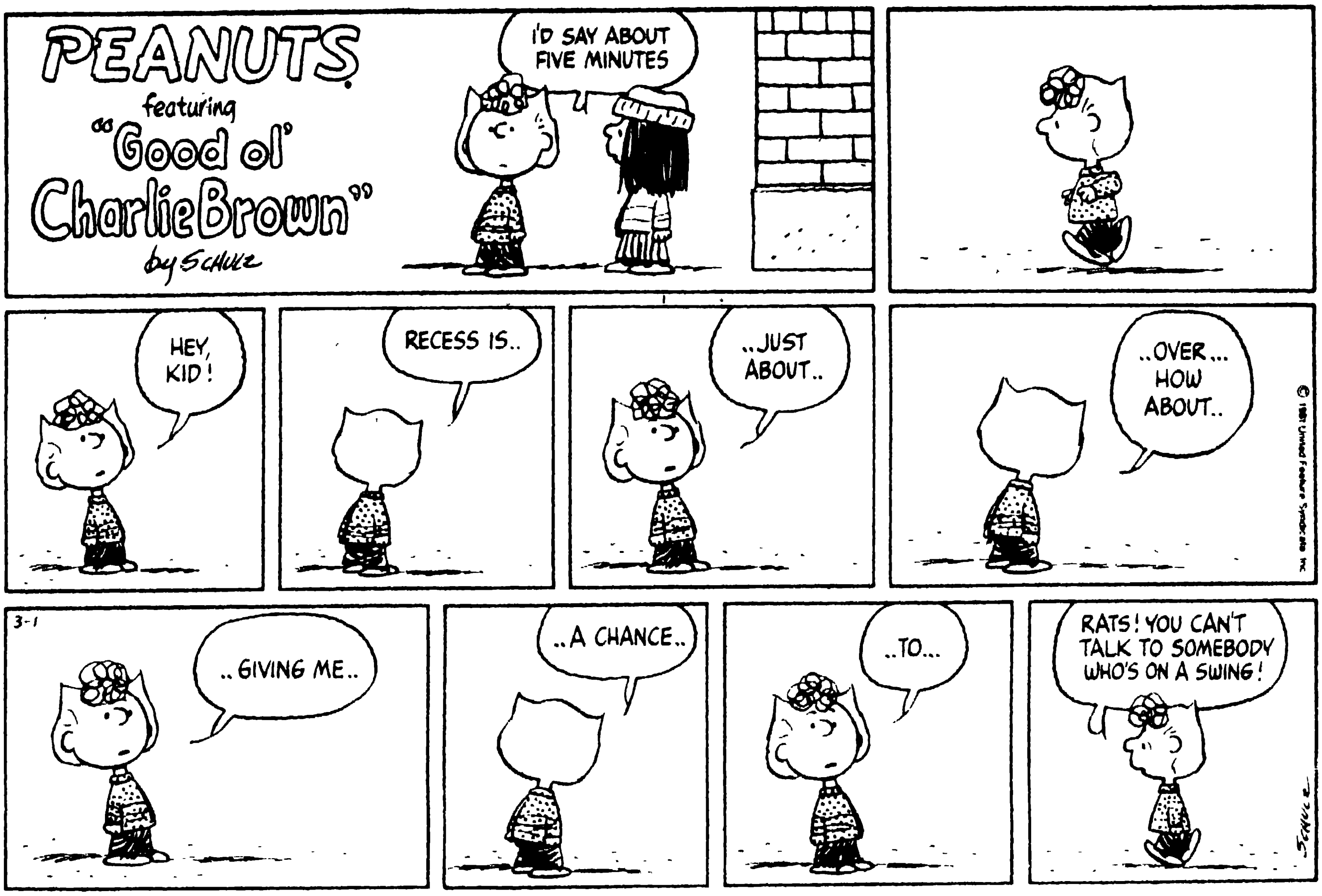
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..OVER... HOW ABOUT..
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VARIETY

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BOMBAY: It happened in Borivli. A couple finding no privacy at home had gone for a film show. During intermission, the woman asked another woman, sitting nearby to accompany her to the loo. When both of them didn't return for half an hour the husband went to investigate. What he found was a sight. His wife was almost in the nude. All her ornaments and clothing had been taken away. Only then did it dawn on him that the 'woman' who accompanied his wife was in disguise. The husband borrowed a saree from an old friend of his near the theatre—*Current* (Ghanshyam Gupta, Delhi)

For every two days a Government of India employee works, he can afford to take a day off. According to a notification of holidays of the Government of India for 1981, 20 holidays and 19 optional holidays have been announced; in addition 52 Sundays and 12 Saturdays; 30 days privilege leave, 20 days casual leave and sick leave: 153 holidays in 365 days—*Blitz* (Usha Gupta, Delhi)

HYDERABAD: There is a never ending debate on whether numerology is a science or superstition, but chief minister Anjaiah is least bothered by such doubt. He seems to have implicit faith in the power of numbers. Speaking to newsmen a few minutes before the swearing-in function, he said that the added up number of his new ministry will be his lucky 'nine' whether it has a strength of 36 (three plus six is nine) or 45 (four plus five). No newsman commented on this personal disclosure of the chief minister, but they were amazed when Mr Anjaiah added in all earnestness: "I may have avoided pruning my 61-member ministry if I had taken two more to make it 63 and complete the nine that rules me. Sixty-one which totals to number seven has perhaps been my undoing"—*Indian Express* (B. N. Pai, Bangalore)

MACHILIPATNAM: A woman and her two daughters found themselves in the same predicament as Surpanaka but with a difference. If Laxmana cut off Surpanaka's nose and ears for making overtures first at Rama and then at himself. some miscreants allegedly suspecting that the woman's son had eloped with a girl meted out the harsh treatment to the women and a youth in the neighbourhood. Last night the miscreants abducted the victims from their house here in a car took them to the outskirts of the town, cut off their nose and ears and abandoned them behind the Hindu College here. The elder daughter managed to reach the Government Hospital and then sent rickshaws to pick the rest of the victims. This was stated in a complaint lodged with the police by the victims—*Indian Express* (G. Ratna Kumari, Machilipatnam)

NEW DELHI: Now a days, if you buy a packet of *jeera* at the Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan in Connaught Place, the *jeera* jeers at you from within the cellophane bag with the label that its date of packing is 13 October, 1981! The flummoxed customer is at a loss to decipher how he is buying a product which is packed eight months ahead—*Hindusthan Times* (S. V. Prasad, New Delhi)

SHIMOGA: A person who died about two years ago is among nearly 100 persons against whom Shimoga police have initiated action under section 107 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Under the provisions of the code which enables the police to take preventive measures to check any breach of peace the police have named 50 persons belonging to one group and the rest belonging to the other to appear before the subdivisional magistrate. Mr B. H. Shankaramurthi, secretary, state unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party and one of the persons named by the police in the proceedings said even those who had left Shimoga long back had. been included in the list. Mr Shankaramurthi alleged that some of the names had been included because of "political pressure." Mr B. N. Nagraj, superintendent of police, Shimoga,said the name of the dead person had crept in inadvertently and the police had rectified the mistake and prepared a revised list—*Hindu* (M. A. Sampath Kumar, Bangalore)

COIMBATORE: A young woman with short cut hair clad in men's wear, who was found selling illicit distilled arrack in her house at Aranmanaipudur, near Tirupur, was arrested. The arrest was made during a massive prohibition raid conducted in and around Tirupur. Police could identify her as a woman only from the voice as she was dressed like a 'man' clad in a *dhoti* and shirt with a towel on her shoulder. It is learnt that the arrested woman Jaya (21) used to don only men's wear even from childhood and would help her mother Subbathal, procure illicitly distilled arrack and sell it. In all this the guise of a man was a help to her—*Hindu* (Pradip Kumar Datta, Birati)

without comment

Prices are stable only on the day when the bazars are closed—J. C. Shah, former Chief Justice of India

These days he (the President) throws light sometimes only when he goes out of the Rashtrapati Bhavan—Jagjivan Ram

To you the toiling workers are *goondas*. To us, they are our comrades. This is the difference in our approach—E. K. Nayanar, the chief minister of Kerala,to the opposition parties

It is only God in the form of a bumper harvest who has done anything for the common man—Piloo Mody

(Journalists are) snakes, scorpions, poison and enemies of people—A. R. Antulay, the chief minister of Maharashtra at a function in Nasik

The general budget and the railway budget have forged a united front to increase inflation and assault the comman man—Madhu Dandavate

The awakening that is taking place in India is going to take forms which cannot be managed by 20-point programmes or by a dynastic succession of one pilot for another—David Selbourne in *India Today*

Is the Hanuman Road(in Delhi) a misspelt version of the world-renowned Hahneman, the founder of homeopathy?—Dr Veronica Carstens, wife of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany

I have practically no audience; even the elite get bored with my films, not to talk of the masses. So I make it for myself—Director Mani Kaul

To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace—Pope John Paul II

If kings, queens and hereditary titles did not exist, few serious people would have the imagination or gall to propose their creation—Editorial in *New Stateman*

I envy India in one respect. Whatever form of democracy is practised there, it has been going on for the last so many years—General Zia-ul Haq

Sex is a very natural phenomenon. All those prudes who propagate that a woman should have sex for the first time on her *suhaag raat* talk bullshit—Actress Rekha quoted in *Current*

SCRIBES ON DOLE

THE two rival unions of journalists—Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ) and National Union of Journalists (NUJ)—seem to have no qualms about taking money from the UP government. In the past few months the UP government has given altogether Rs 1.25 lakhs as grants to the state units of these organisations for their respective conferences. The NUJ was the first to seek the government's help. It told the state information minister, Mr Ammar Rizvi, that as the Kerala government had given Rs one lakh to the IFWJ for its national conference held recently at Cochin, the UP government too should dish out some money for the NUJ's national meet at Agra. The state government doled out Rs 50,000. Not to be outdone, the UP unit of the IFWJ also approached the minister for assistance before its state conference at Faizabad. This time Mr Ammar Rizvi was even more generous. He gave Rs 75,000 Besides, at the Faizabad meet, the state government hosted a dinner, Mr Ammar Rizvi hosted a lunch and two deputy ministers of the V P. Singh team, Sita Ram Nisad and Nirmal Khatri, hosted a meal each—all at government expense While the conference was on, all rooms in the circuit house and the tourist bungalow in Faizabad were booked by the state information department.

RULE, WOMEN!

THE entire subcontinent could soon be ruled by women. Mrs Indira Gandhi, of course, is the Prime Minister here. Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike is waiting in the wings in Sri Lanka. Begum Nusrat and daughter Benazir Bhutto are making life miserable for President Zia of Pakistan. And now Sheikh Mujib's daughter, Haseena Wajed, will end her exile in Delhi to take up the active presidentship of the Bangladesh Awami League, a post to which she has already been elected. She can be expected to launch a crusade against President Zia of Bangladesh. All these women are potential Presidents and Prime Ministers. Interestingly, they are all closely related to charismatic leaders who ruled their countries in the past: Jawaharlal Nehru, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto.

Indira Gandhi

Sirimavo Bandaranaike

Begum Nusrat Bhutto

COME INTO OUR PARLOUR

1981 not being a leap year, former Prime Minister Morarji Desai's birthday was celebrated on 28 February (he was born on 29 February 1896) with a *yagna* at New Delhi's Laxmi Narain *mandir* (popularly known as the Birla temple) by the "Morarji Desai Janamdivas Abhinandan Samity." What was most interesting was the composition of this "samiti." The entire leadership of the Delhi unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the RSS—Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Madan Lal Khurana, R. K. Gupta, P. K. Chandla and, of course, the new convert, Sikander Bakht—figured in it. Was this a not-too-subtle invitation to Mr Desai to come aboard the RSS-BJP ship, particularly when the Janata party seems to have virtually passed a no-confidence motion against the former PM?

NO THOROUGHFARE

A stretch of National Highway No. 25, which goes from Kanpur via Kalpi towards Bombay, has become a bone of contention between civilian and defence authorities in Kanpur, a city with a high concentration of defence establishments. The particular stretch which passes three defence units at Kalpi is closed to heavy vehicular traffic for most of the day, as demanded by the 18,000 defence workers after several road accidents. The road is the main link between Kanpur and the Indian Oil's complex at Panki, where the oil pipeline from Haldia and Barauni (the HBK pipeline) terminates and which is the apex distribution centre for petroleum products in the area. Tankers from all over the state pass through Kanpur city to reach the Panki complex. Due to the closure of the streth of the road near Armapore, the tankers have to take a detour via a narrow road to Kalyanpur to reach the city. The defence authorities are helpless because the workers' unions will not yield to the state government's demand for opening the road. Moreover, an alternate route, via Dadanagar, which has been under construction for the past few years, has not been completed by the state PWD despite repeated pleas by the district magistrate, Mr Ram Krishna. The DM of Kanpur is now in a dilemma—if he yields to the tanker owners' demand and opens the road, there could be disruption in defence production. If he maintains the status quo, as he is doing at present, he is threatened by a tanker owners' strike which will disrupt diesel, koresene and petrol supplies to a large part of the state. All due to the apathy of the state PWD.

CENSORING HISTORY

ON the eve of the seventh non-aligned summit in New Delhi, the films division produced a documentary on the 20 years of the movement. The film included many rare shots of the 1947 Afro-Asian summit in New Delhi, the Bandung conference, non-aligned summits at Belgrade, Cairo, Lusaka, Colombo, Algiers and Havana. The leaders of the Indian delegations featured in the shots of all the conferences, except the one held at Havana. Not that any tears need be shed for the then foreign minister, Mr Shyam Nandan Mishra, whose performance was rather poor. But should the films division censor history?

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

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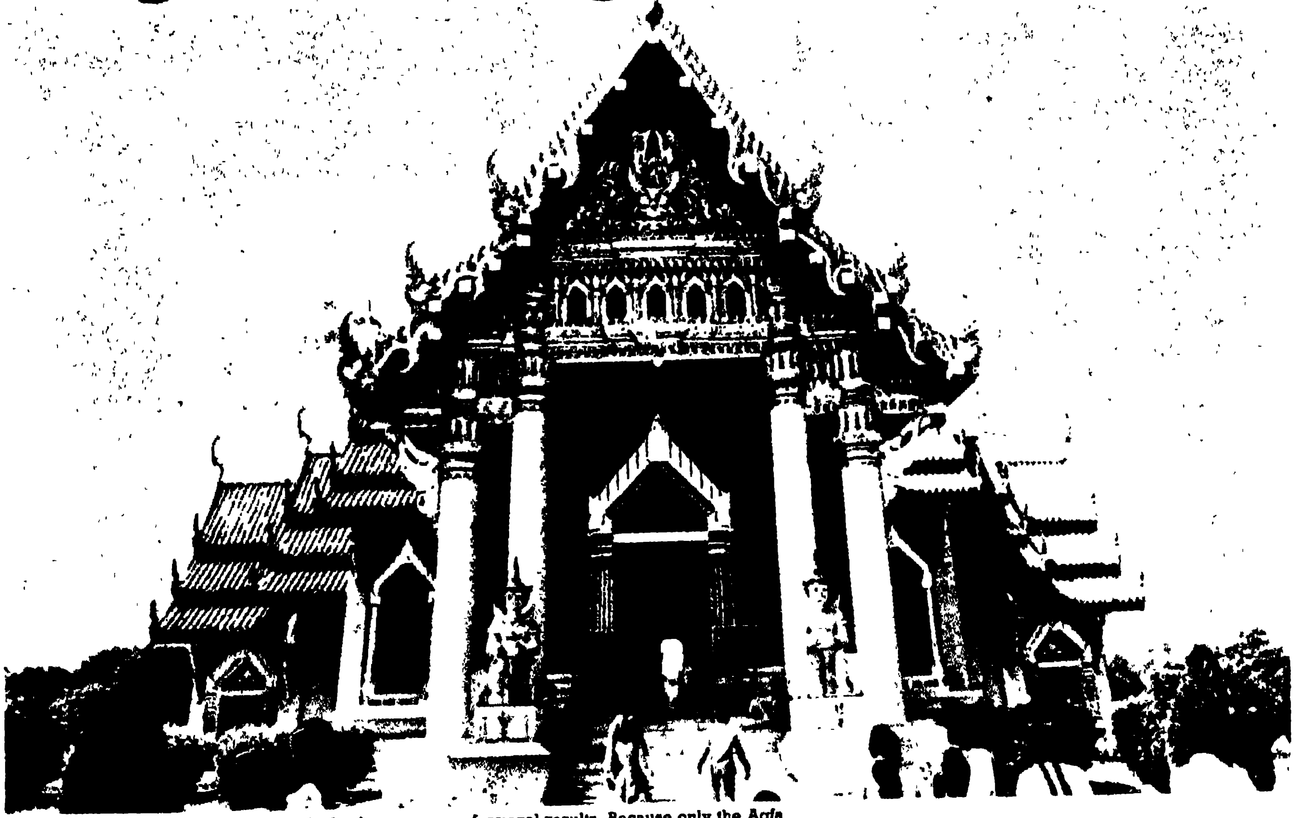

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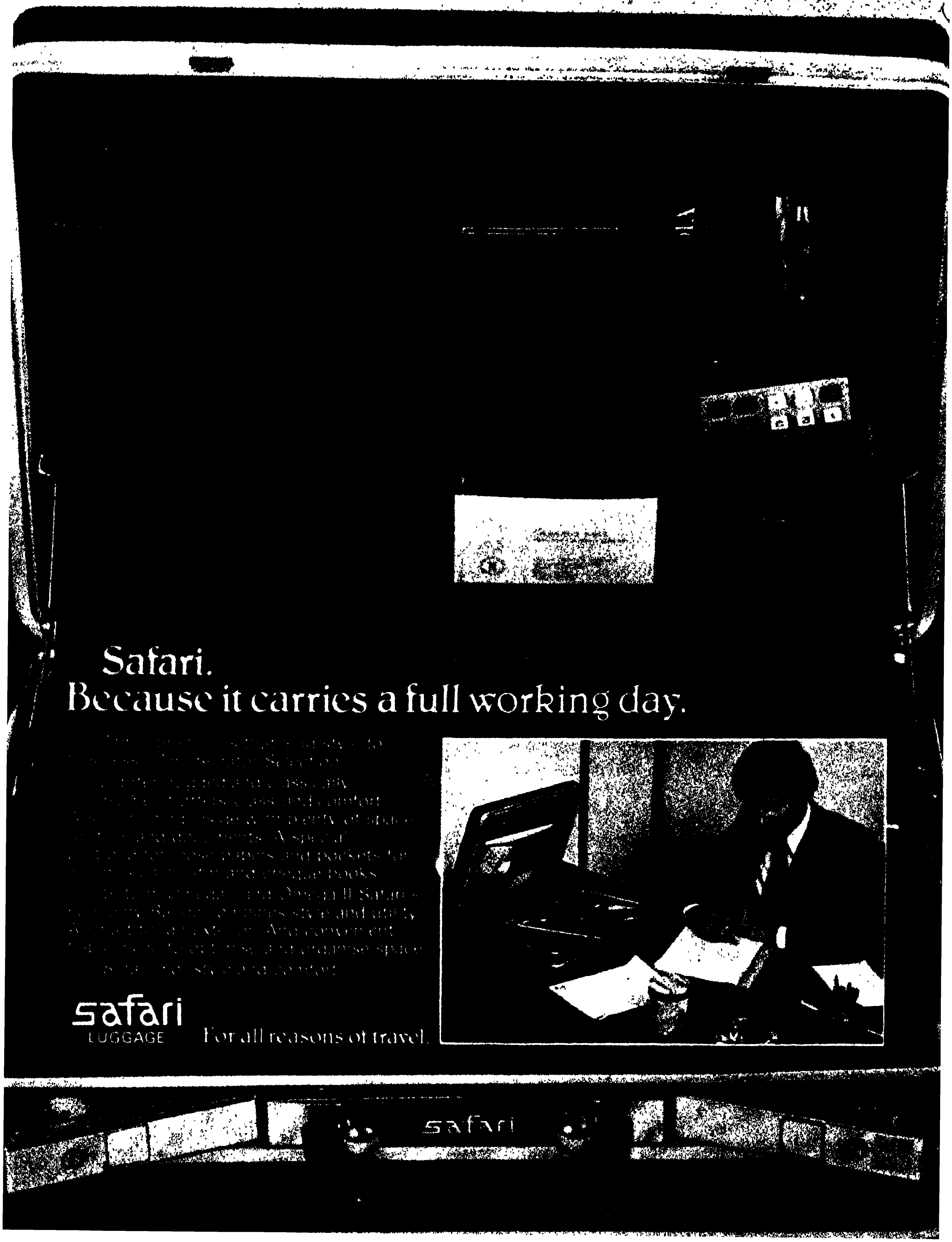
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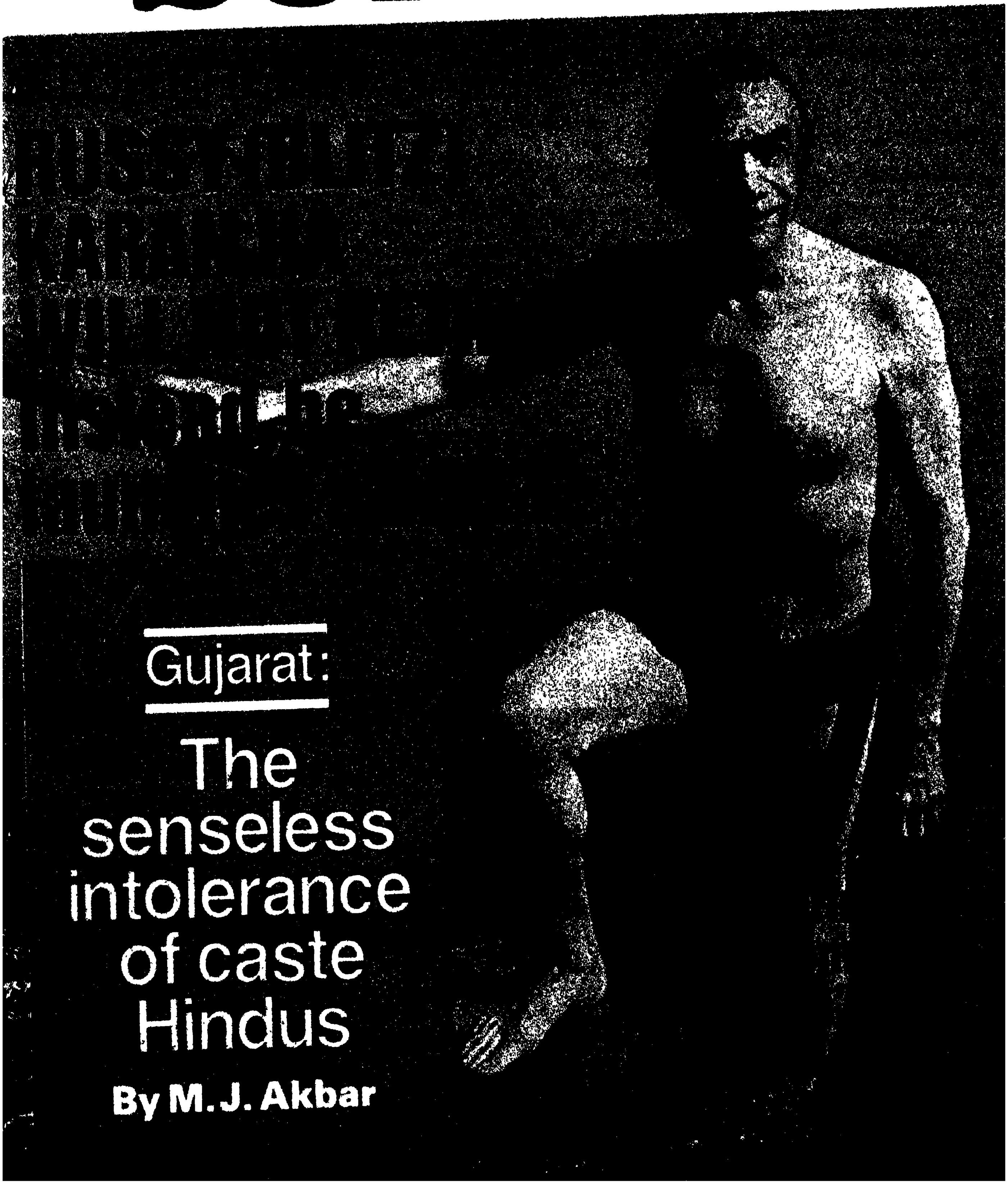
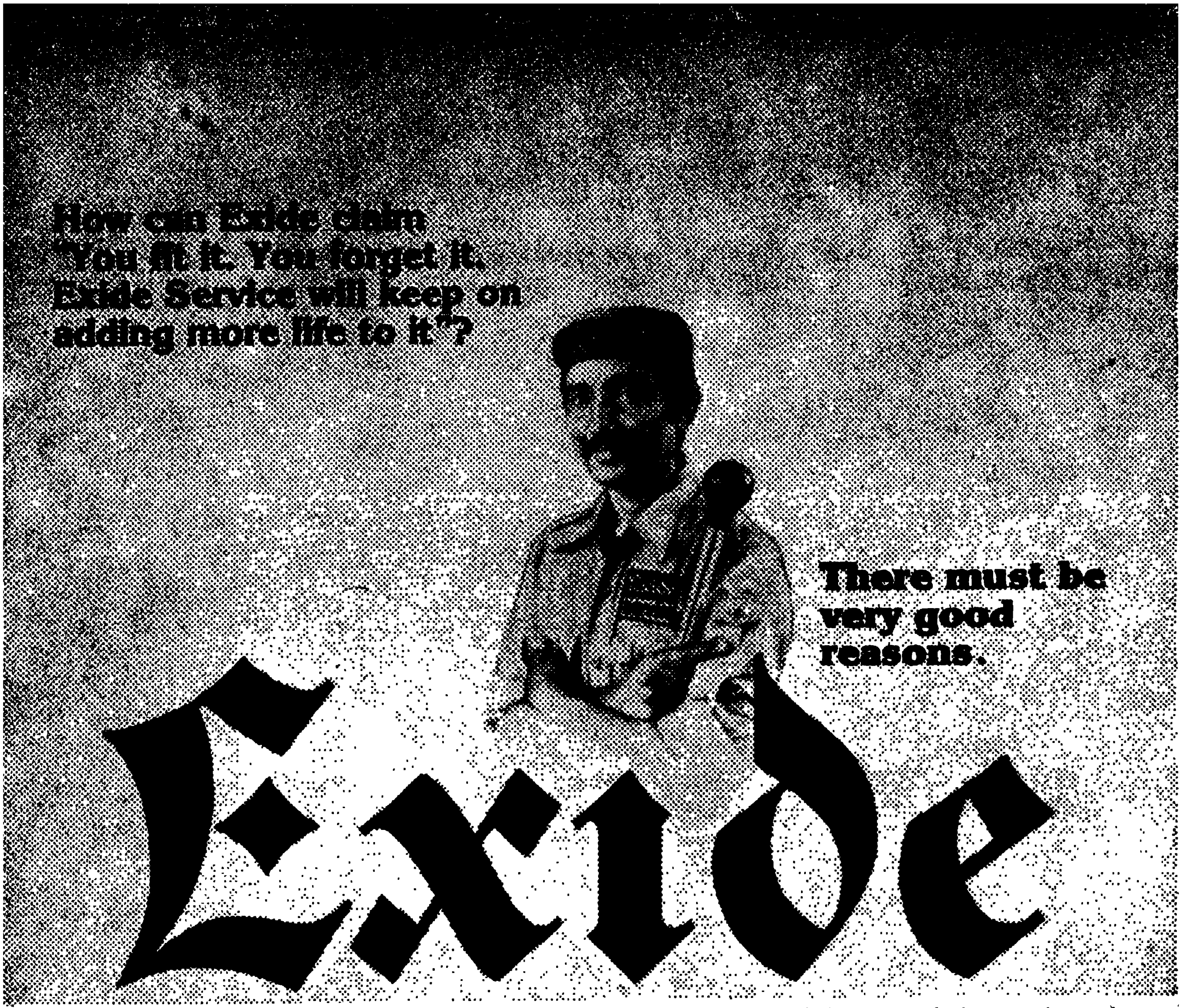


Gujarat:

The senseless intolerance of caste Hindus

By M.J. Akbar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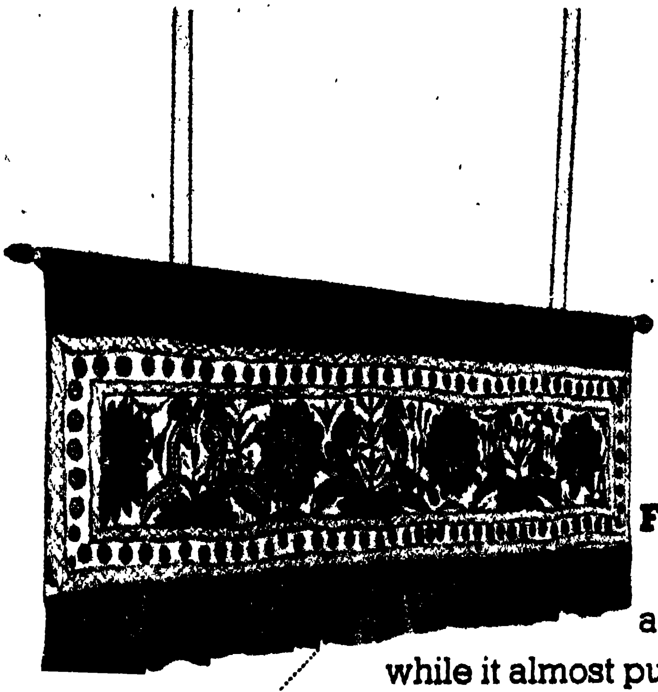

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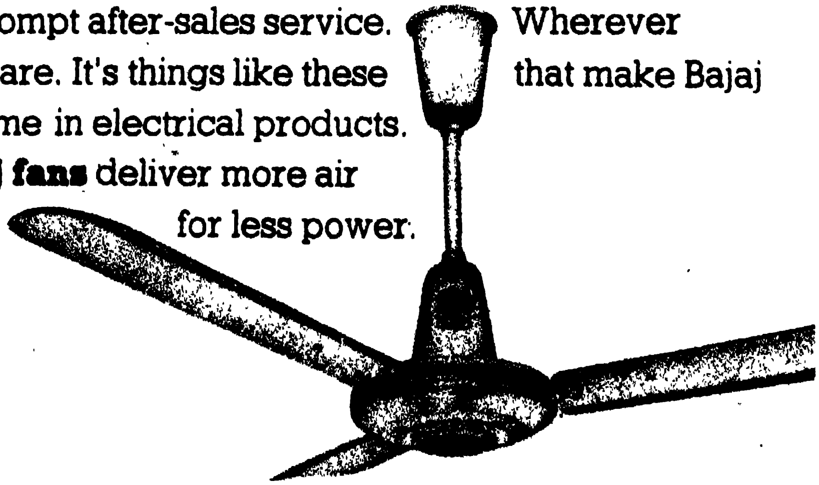

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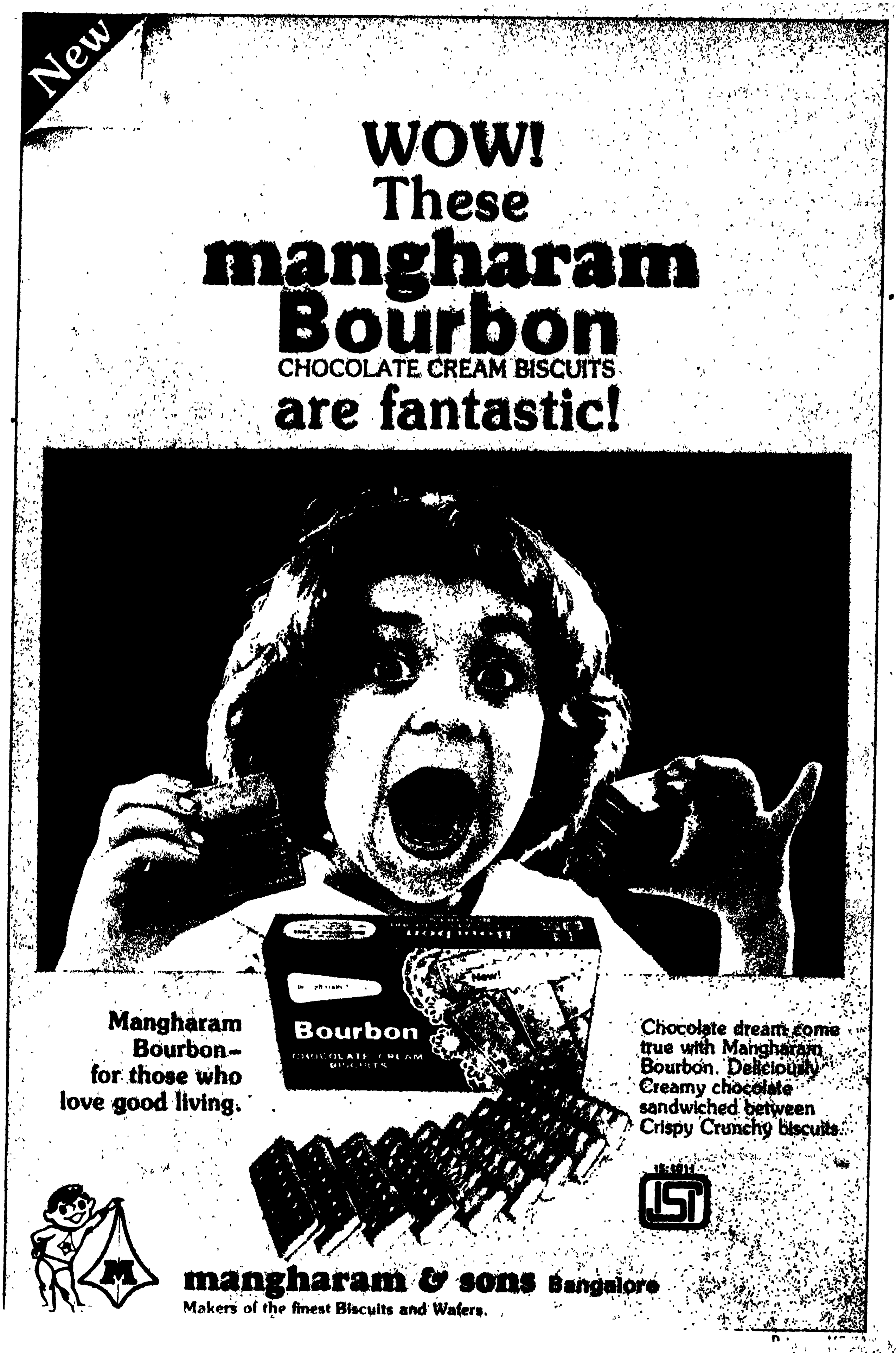

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The caste war in Gujarat goes on unabated as the caste Hindus seek to turn back the wheels of history through their violent agitation to end reservations for the backwards. The Indian constitution is under challenge as also the last 30 years' attempts to right an injustice rooted in Indian history. M. J. Akbar went to Ahmedabad to find out what were the forces that were fanning the flames of hate. **Page 12**

When the Israelis learn of Col Kadhafi's threat to blow up New York if they do not give up all occupied Arab territories in a day, they decide to destroy Libya. This is the tense scenario for the political novel *The Fifth Horseman* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, whose excerpts we carry. **Page 32**

FEROZE MISTRY

Russy Karanjia, editor of *Blitz*, is a colourful personality who has always believed in controversies and challenge. He has now taken a revolutionary step in Indian journalism by creating for the first time in the country a daily English tabloid, *The Daily*. The media and the readers are waiting to see how the tabloid will shape up. **Page 20**

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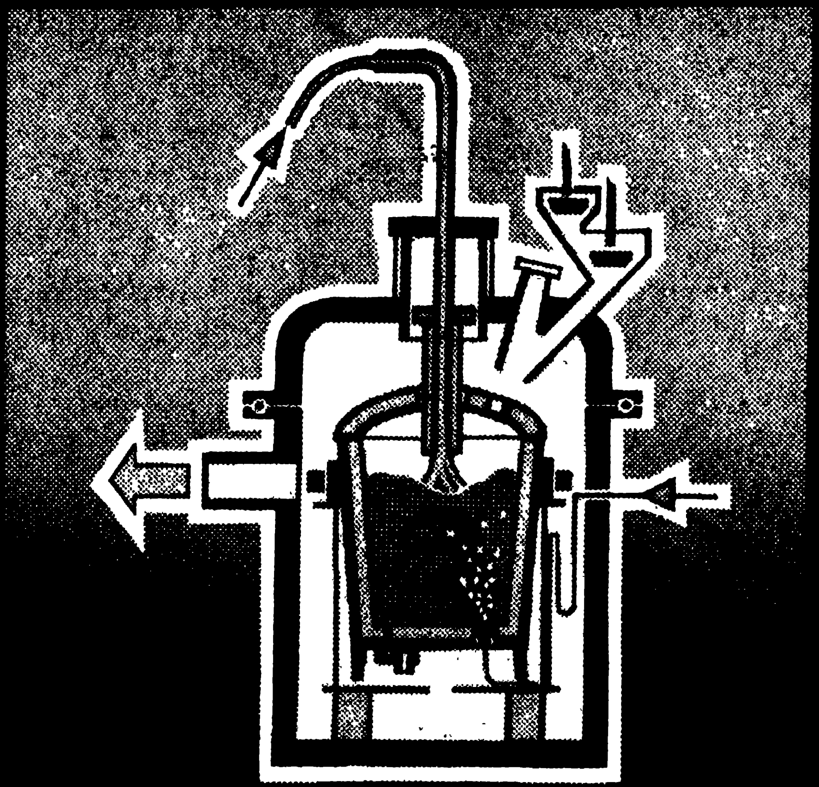

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The Government

A poor PR job

The public row between the World Bank and the Indian government over the Thal Vaishet project could have been avoided had the Indian officials posted in Washington kept a close tab on the situation. If New Delhi had been warned in time of the attitude of the bank officials then remedial action could have been taken to prevent the loan sanction from lapsing. But Indian officials sitting pretty in luxurious Washington kept their home government in the dark. They came to know of the "lapse" only after the World Bank had issued its cryptic statement. The bank did not really want a public row of this sort with its favourite customers. But it was not going to be taken for granted. A little bit of PR work would have settled everything but this our men in Washington failed to do. The bank is already keen to prove that it does not bear India a permanent grudge. It has approved a handsome $ 400 million loan for the other giant fertiliser project, Hazari.

What will paper mills live on?

The directorate-general of technical development(DGTD) in the industries ministry has been indiscriminately licensing capacity for the production of paper and paper boards without locating adequate supplies of raw materials. At this rate, many a unit will come to a grinding halt for want of raw materials after a few years. Forest resources have been dwindling sharply in recent years. Development of forest land is a state subject and unless the centre takes effective steps there may be an even greater paper shortage in the future. Efforts are needed to further broaden the raw material base of the paper industry by using agricultural residues like sugarcane bagasse, jute sticks and waste paper. It is theoretically possible to produce a million tonnes of paper from the sugarcane bagasse now being burnt by the sugar mills. Just to retain the present per capita level of paper consumption of two kg, paper production will have to rise from the present one million tonnes to over two million tonnes in the next 25 years. We must, however, aim at a per capita consumption of at least 4.5 kg by the year 2000 keeping in mind the rise in education, employment and literacy. The central government will have to immediately take matters in hand if this target is to be fulfilled.

Twice lucky

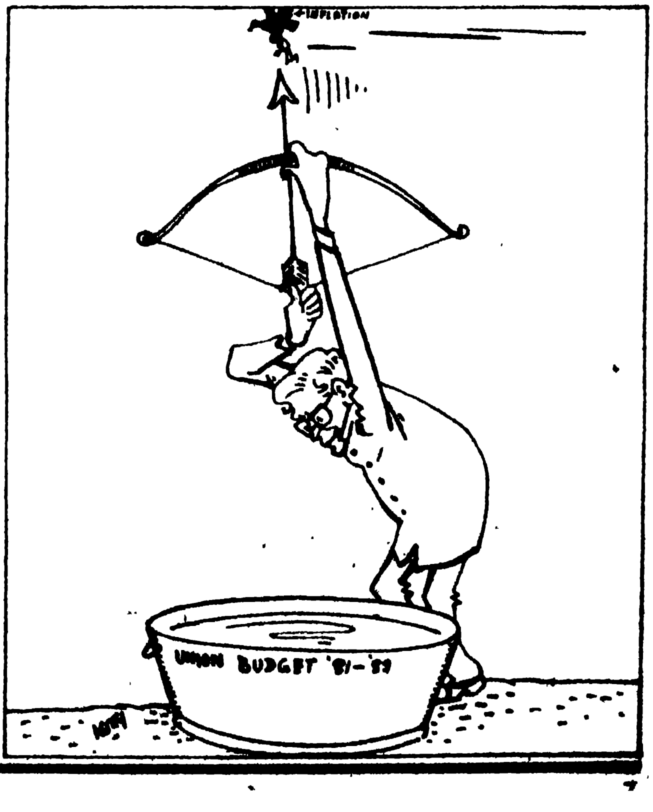
How did railways minister Kedar Pande sail so merrily through both Houses of Parliament while replying to the debate on the railway budget? He mollified his critics in the Lok Sabha by announcing several concessions in the stiff new imposts he had made on both freight and passenger traffic. But he was clever enough to ward off repeated queries about the total impact of these reliefs. Before they could really get at him he rushed off to the Rajya Sabha to reply to the debate there. But the elders knew their job better and Mr Pandey had to come out with how much his concessions would actually amount to. And what an anti-climax it was! Concessions of only Rs three crores had been made on the new measures that would fetch Rs 353 crores annually. But even here Mr Pande, was lucky. It was too late in the evening for reporters to pick up this story of virtually non-existent concessions. The railway board members present promised details the next day. But that next day is yet to come.

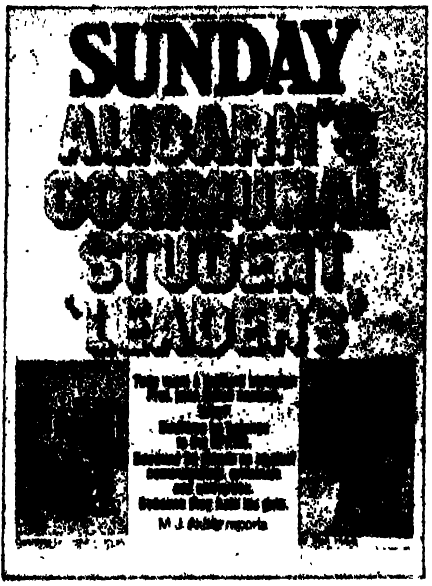
Two masters for export units

The scheme for quick sanctioning of 100 per cent export-oriented units, formulated by the commerce ministry is off to a good start. Altogether 21 applications for such units have been cleared so far. But there is a duality of control over the sanctioning procedure that may lead to problems later. The applications will have to be submitted to the secretariat for industrial approvals which will then forward them to the commerce ministry for clearance by a special board. Thus the industries ministry can easily kill the scheme by either not forwarding deserving applications or forwarding those which have more clout than expertise. This would not have been the case had the whole matter been left in the hands of the commerce ministry but the exceptionally powerful industries secretary managed to retain a hold on the scheme. Currently, units to be set up in the Kandla and Santa Cruz export processing zones are sanctioned by the commerce ministry itself. The matter is referred to the secretariat for industrial approvals only when an industrial licence is necessary.

Free trips for kisans

The railways ran 140 special trains for the kisan rally in Delhi on 16 February and earned Rs 1.5 crores. But they seemed to have conveniently ignored the fact that all these trains were jampacked. Surely the hire charges per train could not have been fixed irrespective of the number of people who would actually travel. If one train carried the load of two then the railways lost by that much. Exceptional overcrowding must have taken its toll on the life of the rolling stock. This large-scale diversion of the railways' resources had its own impact on the services available to regular passengers. The railway board does not seem to have minded all this in the least.





SUNDAY
ALIGARH'S COMMUNAL STUDENT 'LEADERS'
M J Akbar reports

Hero of Aligarh

Aligarh's communal student 'leaders' (1 February) by M. J. Akbar gives a fairly balanced account of what is happening at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). I am not involved in the so-called ideological clash, and can give an unbiased view of the situation: I think that if we want to save AMU from total extinction, we must rally behind persons like Dr Irfan Habib.
Athar Husain, Biochemistry Division, AMU, Aligarh

As a student of AMU, I have felt that anyone can command the students' following in the university by whipping up emotions. The present stock of student leaders is not, perhaps, communal. But their method is the same: their agitation against Dr Habib gained momentum only after they gave a call to "save Islam". In Aligarh all those who claim that Islam's honour is in danger, insult it unfailingly.
Khalid Abu Saleh, Patna

The students have claimed that their agitation is on a large scale. I think the agitation has a limited following; it is not directed against an ideology as a whole, or against an institution, or even against political parties which have played havoc with the university, but, sadly, against an enlightened and reasonable person. The students may succeed in getting rid of Prof. Habib, who is recognised as one of the greatest living historians today; but this would be the greatest defeat for the revivalist organisations instigating the students. Dr Irfan, with his knowledge, would be welcome anywhere, but the loss would be the community's, the university's and the potential student's. Posterity will be told how AMU in 1981 had thrown out Dr Irfan because logic failed to compromise with sentiment; they will be reminded of the crimes perpetrated on enlightened persons in medieval Europe who, similarly, spoke the truth.

The agitation has been started under the garb of defending Islam; this shows that the students have no idea at all of the true Islamic spirit. Islam is being used as a veil for orthodox and reactionary forces directed against reform. Philosophically, Islam stands for socialism and change. The students should not destroy this Islamic spirit by demonstrating against a person whom our community should be proud of. Let me clarify that the Almighty has given us no authority to judge the sincerity of a person, whether or not he accepts the Supreme Force. The agitation also betrays the students' poor academic standards and lack of education. Frankly, it is due to the efforts of Dr Habib that Muslims today can study history without feeling guilty. He shattered the myth that Muslims came to India to convert non-believers and maintain huge harems. Is this no contribution to Islam?
M. Atyab Siddiqui, Delhi

On behalf of the Indian History Congress, I would like to express my gratitude for your extremely informative and courageous article on the recent developments in AMU, exposing the vicious communal campaign against Prof. Irfan Habib, one of India's most eminent and respected historians. Your readers may be interested to know that the Indian History Congress at its 41st session in Bombay in the last week of December, which was attended by more than 1,000 historians, passed a unanimous resolution condemning the attacks on Prof. Habib and calling on the authorities concerned to take energetic measures against such incidents. Far from being able to do so, the vice-chancellor has now seen fit to chargesheet Prof. Habib and has appointed a person whose impartiality is extremely suspect to head the enquiry committee. Such policies threaten all academic, secular and civilised values.
Sumit Sarkar, Secretary, Indian History Congress, New Delhi

The Muslims of India are grateful to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan for the sacrifices he made to establish AMU. But strikes and communal riots were not what he dreamt of. Seeing the present condition of AMU, this Urdu couplet comes to mind: *"Qaum bepar hai Deen bekas hai, Gai Islam ke Kidhar waris" (translated roughly, this means: people have lost their identity; religion is helpless. Where are those who care for Islam?*
Masood Akhtar, Meerut

You have not mentioned one aspect of the trouble: a very senior professor of the history department has been giving moral and material support to students to get rid of Dr Habib. During the pre-Emergency period he was very close to the then union education minister and was aspiring to become the VC. But students and teachers opposed his nomination.
M. Perwez Ahmad, Monghyr

A professor of the AMU history department who is an opportunist and communalist is behind the trouble. He shot into prominence during the Emergency and later developed close links with the erstwhile Jana Sangh, the RSS and Deendayal Upadhyaya Sansthan during the Janata regime. Now he is a champion of Islam. He was an aspirant for the post of VC, but failed to get nominated. So he hired some student leaders to agitate against Dr Irfan Habib and create trouble for the present VC. 'Seniors' in AMU are a menace; they have made the halls their permanent residence and enjoy privileges like free boarding and financial assistance reserved for poor and meritorious students. Because of their interference in admissions, brilliant Muslim students from far-off places fail to get into AMU. I am convinced these forces have the least sympathy for Muslims in general. They even have close links with Hindu communalists with whom they unite to fight the progressive and secular forces in AMU. That is why ABVP-supported candidates could become presidents of the students' union in collusion with the Jamaat.
Rasia Sultana (ex-student, AMU), Sambalpur, Orissa

If a student like Manzar Safi has found shelter in the university even after he has been expelled, who is responsible? It is the administrative staff who are always trying to defend him. No doubt Dr Irfan Habib is an eminent historian; he is also a committed politician. His unpopularity among the students is not due to his views but his marxist activities on the campus.
Syed Mohammad Zia, 9, Mumtaz Hostel, Aftab Hall, AMU, Aligarh

I am sure your report will help general students who are not a party to the agitation to see the picture in a clear perspective.
M. Ishrat Alam, Patna

The views expressed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan at different places proves to be an eye-opener to those who always seek an opportunity to divide Hindus and Muslims for their own selfish ends. Every peaceloving and true Indian who swears by socialism and secularism will appreciate your coverage.
M. L. Kamal, Varanasi

I do not think it is students who are agitating against Dr Habib but *goondas* and criminals.
Afroz Shaheen, Patna

The fact that students like Manzar Safi and Javaid Habib justify the military regime of Pakistan shows their fascist bent of mind. These criminal elements are a challenge not only to Dr Habib but all who stand by democracy and secularism.
Rafiq Alam, Bhagalpur

Congratulations to Mr Akbar and Dr Habib. Here is an editor and a professor who have the ability to fight the corrupt, the criminal and the communal.
Priyadhan Nandy, Hooghly

A *pardar* community?

Dr Zakir Husain did not finish his full term as the vice-chancellor of AMU and resigned in 1956. I still very vividly remember his last day in the university as VC. After great persuasion, the students' union people were able to make Zakir Saheb agree to come to the union hall to give a farewell speech. Unfortunately, a student died at night in the university hospital after prolonged affliction from jaundice. Zakir Saheb first went to the hospital in the morning, joined the boy's funeral procession to the church and attended the service. He came to the union hall at the appointed hour in the evening, immaculately dressed, as always, but visibly sad. I still recall every moment of this event and every word of his speech. He opened by saying that it was a sad day and not appropriate for a meeting: *Hamare ek sathi ne aaj hamko alvida kahi hai"* (one of us has bid us goodbye). He went on to make his speech and in the course of it, he narrated a fable.

It is impossible to translate his beautiful Urdu but the story went something like this: In a forest there lived a community of parrots. A *bahelia* (bird-trapper) lived in a nearby village. He used to catch parrots by a novel method. He would put a long string through a number of small pieces of *narkul* (hollow twig) and tie it from one tree to another. The parrots would perch on these *narkul* pieces. Since the pieces were hollow and loose, the parrots would lose balance and keep going round and round until the *bahelia* came and caught them. After a long time, when many parrots had been fooled by the *bahelia's* ingenuity, a reformer was born into this community. He established a school. He taught the parrots: *"Hum par dar janwar hain. Hum shikari ke narkul par kabhi naheen baithainge. Aur agar baith bhi gaye to par pharphara kar ur jayainge"* (We are feathered animals. We shall never perch on the poacher's string. And even if we do, we shall fly away...for we are feathered animals.)

When every single parrot, young and old, had learnt the lesson by heart, the reformer left the forest and went elsewhere, satisfied that he had finally beaten the *bahelia*. After a few months, the reformer happened to pass through the forest and thought he would visit the parrot community and see how they were doing. He found that the *bahelia* had stretched his string as before. A whole lot of parrots were perched on the *narkul* pieces, going round and round, without letting go. The only change was that they kept chanting *"Hum par dar janwar hain. Hum shikari ke narkul par kabhi naheen baithainge. Aur agar baith bhi gaye to par pharphara kar ur jayainge."*

Indian Muslims are *pardar* animals. Sir Syed was the reformer. He established AMU. No further comments are needed.

Zamir Ansari, New Delhi

Corruption, malfunctioning: Is AMU any exception?

Undoubtedly, Prof. Irfan Habib is a learned man, but his views are only partly correct. Besides, one should not wash one's dirty linen in public. Corruption and malfunctioning have been prevailing in all Indian universities; AMU is no exception. Prof. Habib holds powerful posts. He is dean, faculty of social sciences, as well as a member of the executive council—the university's highest body. So, he should have tried to set things right instead of expressing his views in the *Indian Express*, which has been trying to tarnish the image of AMU for several years. After the arrival of Syed Hamid as VC, criminal activities were checked considerably. All students with criminal records were rusticated. So, it is very wrong to say that criminals are receiving shelter in the AMU campus.

Students who did not agree with Prof.Habib's idelogy have been refused admission in the research section. Prof. Habib has been exploiting the non-teaching employees for several years. It was on his instructions that the employees staged a *dharna* and struck work a few years ago, for the first time in AMU's history.

The agitation started by AMU leaders originally, did not get much support among the students. It was only when the district magistrate came to the VC's lodge and threatened the leaders with dire consequences that students at large began rallying behind them. As far as discipline and academic standards are concerned, they are very disciplined and their academic calibre is comparable to that of students in any other university.
Dr M. Nasim-e-Sehar, House Surgeon, Department of Orthopaedics, J. N. Medical College, Aligarh

Prof. Habib's statement in the *Indian Express*, New Delhi, of 13 January does not sustain your theory of a communal student leadership. In his interview, he refers to a "misrule of criminals." He would like everyone in the university administration to fully realise his reponsibilities, and not allow himself to be a victim of circumstances. I assure you, Mr Syed Hamid, the VC, and his team are fully capable of taking care of the university. You seem to suggest that peace in AMU is only attainable by the display of armed force, as shown in the photographs.
Mohd. Asif Ali Khan, 23C Medical Colony, AMU, Aligarh

Your report is far from the truth. I was shocked to read it.
S. A. Saghir, Giridih, Bihar

If AMU is in such a bad state as you have found it in, could you please name a single faultless university in our country? Speaking from experience in some other universities, I dare say AMU is one place where girls receive respect from boys. AMU has a distinct culture which other universities miserably lack.
Razia Ashraf, Kanpur

The statement about the lack of theatrical activity in AMU is not a fact. In reality, the AMU drama club has been working efficiently and uninterruptedly since its inception. (Miss Zaheda Zaidi's attempt, note, had been a personal venture of her own.) It has helped to promote theatrical activities on the campus, so much so that the drama club has had to start an annual drama festival since 1968. Being competitive, the festival began to grow with more items and more teams (not less than 15 at any time) taking part in it. Last year Miss Zaidi herself was one of the judges. Besides, the drama club has been taking part regularly in drama competitions organised by the Allahabad Natya Sangh, Punjab university, Allahabad university and Benares Hindu University. The last one deserves special mention, as the departure of the AMU team for the Kashi Yatra '81 coincided with the students' agitation on the campus. The AMU students' union and the authorities encouraged us to go to BHU so that relations between the two universities could be improved. The team consisted of ten boys, four girls and this is the case every time a drama club team goes out. Most of the plays staged here are mixed. The women's college too stages its own performances almost every month and actively participates in the annual drama festival. To further refute the allegation that there is no place for girls on the Aligarh stage, I would like to mention my own appointment as secretary of the drama club—the highest controlling body for promotion of cultural activities on the campus. Also, since 1977 the post of president of the AMU drama club has been held by a non-Muslim, Dr G.D. Bhattacharya, the film, radio and theatre personality, and media consultant to the UN. This is enough to prove that AMU is basically a non-communal institution.
Saba Naheed, Secretary, AMU Drama Club, Room No. 5, G.E.C. Kennedy House, AMU, Aligarh 202 001

If there is so much communalism, crime and corruption in AMU, how do the students compete so successfully in the IAS, and PCS examinations? There were no defamatory articles when students of BHU manhandled their VC and a dean on Republic Day.
S. A. A. Alvi, Medical Road, Dodhpur, Aligarh

Could anyone please show how a university's standards can be raised by talking to a national daily? Your analysis is partial, prejudiced and lacks evidence.
Syed Sayeeduddin, Vice-President, Aligarh Management Association, Department of Business Administration, AMU, Aligarh 202 001

Since when has opposition to marxist views become communal activity? How could a few slogans painted on the walls of AMU lead Mr Akbar to dub all Aligarh students communalists? Also, Prof. Habib has never been opposed in AMU for his marxist views; he is unpopular among the students for his political activities on the campus.
Ishtiaq Ali, President, Journalism Society, AMU, Aligarh

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RSS' misdeeds

It astounded me to read about the RSS as a force to reckon with in Tellicherry (*RSS vs CPM*, 1 February). The onesidedness of the report is clear from the insinuations made regarding the alleged bomb blast at the CPI(M) headquarters in Tellicherry. The RSS men might have managed to put a dynamite in one of the old, dilapidated rooms on the upper storey of the building; there are many such rooms in the building. The CPI(M) office functions in one of these. The bomb might have been burst by operating some device from outside. The blast occurred at two am, when all vehicular traffic was off the roads and the town was asleep. To say that a bloody incident was averted by sheer luck because not a single marxist worker was in the office is pointless; the question of any marxist worker being in the office at the hour does not arise.

The spate of political murders in Tellicherry in 1980 can be traced back to the lockout of Mangalore Ganesh Beedi in 1968, and the shifting of the company to Mangalore consequently. When the *bidi* workers, a large chunk of them being marxists, fought for their demands, the RSS men stood for the company-owners' interests and tried to defeat the agitation. As a result, an RSS activist died. Later in December 1970, the RSS hatched a plot to incite communal hatred in Tellicherry, which has a significant Muslim population. In the communal riots that ensued, U. K. Kunhiraman, a marxist leader, was hacked to death by RSS men. Mr Kunhiraman and his colleagues tried to save a mosque which RSS workers were attacking. During the massive attack on *bidi* workers in 1979, RSS men from Mysore, Mangalore, Calicut and Wynad were deployed at Tellicherry. The sole RSS worker killed in the violence at Patiam, Tellicherry, hailed from Wynad and was reportedly a muscleman of a plantation tycoon there. The RSS has no roots in the social life of Kerala. The statement that there has been large-scale defection from the CPI(M) to the RSS is a figment of the imagination. If at all the RSS enjoys support, it is from the business community, anti-socials and Hindu fanatics.

Sukumaran Kunhery, Tellicherry

Tough, did you say?

Mrs Gandhi gets tough (1 February) by Barun Sengupta betrays a slight misreading of the political situation as also a pronounced bias towards Mrs Gandhi. First, the notion that "her (Mrs Gandhi's) solid supporters were the poor people of the country" is proved wrong by the injustices against poor people in villages: even today they keep away or are forcibly kept away from polling booths so that they cannot vote. Second, the country's voters are, more or less, compartmentalised, with seven to ten per cent of floating votes which really tilt the balance. Mrs Gandhi can hardly hope to win against a united opposition. Third, Mrs Gandhi believes more in gimmicks than in well-thought-out programmes. (It is another matter that she has a very good sense of timing to make these gimmicks appear serious.) From bank nationalisation to the LIC ordinance, the emphasis has been more on propaganda than real good. Fourth, the fact that Mrs Gandhi is getting tough with the middle-class worker must be viewed in relation with two factors: her issuance of black money bonds and the fact that the income of the house of Birlas is equivalent to that of 11 crores of people. Fifth, Mrs Gandhi and other politicians can never take firm action to control prices, for obvious reasons.

Mrs Gandhi is at best Razia Sultana and Putli Bai rolled into one. Razia entices with her attractive slogans and Putli Bai kicks out when the need arises; where Razia fails, Putli Bai succeeds.

Ashok Kumar Singh, Calcutta

There is no denying that Mrs Gandhi should come down heavily to set things right. For that matter, any person in her position would not, and should not, remain a silent spectator to what is happening today. But the panacea Mr Sengupta holds out, i. e., "ensure rapid economic progress, take away some of the privileges enjoyed by the rich and middle-class..." is contradicted by what he says in the very next sentence: "She is not expected to hit everyone simultaneously." Besides, why is Mr Sengupta silent about the other sections of society—smugglers, blackmarketeers etc? Or does he think the middle-class are the only troublemakers?

R. P. Sarathy, Madras

A post mortem

So even some letters addressed to our communications minister Mr C. M. Stephen have been delivered to the wrong person (*Delhi Diary*, 1 February). Our PM is on record as having called our telephone system "rotten." According to replies given to MPs' queries in Parliament, the postal department has other dubious distinctions: the payments on forged money orders and fraudulent withdrawal of a few lakhs of rupees from post office savings accounts, especially in Varanasi district. (Lok Sabha Question 419, Dt 7-7-80). After 33 years, should we call these blessings of *swaraj*?

V. L. Narayana, Howrah

Loksakti and *rajsakti*

That (*Shourie's analysis*, 2 November) "the fate of the Janata government was sealed when JP and Acharya Kripalani decided to make Morarji Desai the first Janata PM" is unquestionable. But was this not the logical conclusion to JP's idea that *loksakti* can control *rajsakti* even by keeping itself outside the purview of *rajsakti*? JP had a very strong personality; the "big three" who fought among themselves for power are, no doubt, pygmies in comparison. But whether JP himself was inherently capable of guiding the youth-force is debatable.

Ashim Kumar Chakraborty, Gaya

The guilty party

It is not Manmad Pappan (*The south's arrack scandal*, 1 February) who is the industrialist-cum-estate-owner-cum-*akbari* contractor but Manarkad Pappan. Arthur Pais, surprisingly, did not mention Pappan's strong political leanings: he is an active Congress(I) member and even contested, and won, the last Kerala Assembly election from Udambancholai. Mr Pais should have also mentioned that it was the official CPI(M) organ *Deshabhimani* which first brought the shocking details of the story to light; that it was only at the intervention of Kerala excise minister that the two lorries, each carrying 12,000 litres of rectified spirit, were intercepted at Trichur; that the present LDF government is the first to have arrested a number of quite powerful and influential *akbari* contractors and registered cases against them prior to ordering a police enquiry. Simply because one person in the excise minister's personal staff happens to be related to one of the accused in the scandal, it is not ethical to involve the minister in the scandal. This is mischievous propaganda aimed at pulling down the LDF government.

D. Rajan, New Delhi

Incredible feat

Unfortunately, I have had no opportunity to read Samaresh Bose before. As such I would not know if he was actually eligible to get the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1980. The mastery he demonstrates (*The tantrik quest*, 25 January-1 February) in describing the movement of a flaccid penis from a position nearly touching the ground to the right, left, upwards, downwards and then circling it in the air, has made me believe that greatness has not been thrust on him; he was born a genius and may win yet another award for his incredulous quest.

Khalilur Rahman 'Zakhmi', Officer, Rupali Bank, Zonal Office, 2 Sir Iqbal Road, Khulna, Bangladesh

Facing facts in Iran

Perhaps for the first time any Iranian leader spoke in a comparatively soft tone (*We believe in Jehad*, 1 February). This is definite proof that these once-fanatical personalities are slowly coming to terms with reality. Previously, they would find fault with everyone, save themselves. One cannot criticise all others while calling oneself "good"—at least not for long.

Snehasish Ray, Puri

Last letter

[illegible]

Rs 60 for the last letter

COVER STORY

Gujarat: The senseless intolerance of caste Hindus

If the agitation by anti-reservationists in Gujarat was merely a matter of ironing certain minor anomalies in the reservation policy, it could have had some merit. But just beneath the cloak of sophisticated argument lies the truth : that this is a brutal caste war launched by the privileged against the harijans. The students original demands have, in fact, been conceded by the government, but they are still continuing this agitation because they want to make every city and every village in Gujarat—and perhaps in India—into a battleground where the rich, privileged upper castes will use both the weapons at their command, the violent arsenal and the smooth tongue, to once again destroy the harijans, in whom the first embers of self-respect are beginning to burn. In the villages of Gujarat, where the agitation has spread (making it so much more dangerous), the upper caste Patels openly say that if the harijans begin to behave as equals, who will be the slave labourer? M. J. AKBAR went into rural Gujarat to bring back this report of an intolerant and cruel agitation

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Sabarmati, July 1917
Disbanded: 1.8.1933

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Observances: Truth, Non-violence or Love, Chastity (Brahmacharya), Control of the Palate, Non-stealing, Non-possession or poverty, Swadeshi, Fearlessness, Removal of untouchability, Equality of religions, Physical labour.

Principle IX: Removal of untouchability. Untouchability, which has taken such deep root in Hinduism, is altogether irreligious. Its removal has therefore been treated as an independent principle. The so called untouchables have equal place in the ashram with other castes.

JETALPUR

For nine nights every year, Gujaratis surrender to a beautiful tradition, of song and dance and worship. Young men and women gather in circles, linked together by sound and movement and joy, swaying to a beat that has occupied a place in the Gujarati heart for as long as anyone can remember. *Navratri* is the festival of Gujarat; and *garba* is the highlight.

Jetalpur is a prosperous, Patel-dominated rural town a little more than half an hour's drive away from Ahmedabad. It does not look like a conventional mud-and-bamboo village, since most of the houses are *pucca* stone and cement structures, quite often rising to three or four floors. But the pattern of living is less than cosmopolitan, and that perhaps defines it as rural India more than the sight of magnificently horned livestock munching hay with serene confidence, or the bare land stretching out from the edges of habitation, waiting for the farmer to sow and reap. The main communities live in separate areas of Jetalpur: the 500 plus Patel houses are in one contiguous area; the 150 *darbara* or *thakur* houses in another. And of course, the more than 100 houses of harijans are completely separate, on the rough edge: while there may be a little overlap among the caste Hindu houses, there is absolutely no question of any overlap with harijans.

It is when you enter the harijan area also that you realise that Jetalpur is more a village than a small town. Here is suddenly the world of mud huts and hunger; this is a world apart, struggling to find some sustenance—hopefully, in the year of the lord 1981, outside the grip of the landowner and the moneylender. The harijan youth must make his narrow way from the bus stop on the highway, or from work on someone else's field, back to his world behind the curtain of contempt. There is a large, brightly coloured temple near the main entrance of

ANJSHAL, COURTESY: SANDESH

Furniture of a bank set on fire by arsonists during the Ahmedabad bandh *on 6 February*

Jetalpur, but no harijan has ever been allowed to enter it. Neither may the harijan display any hint of equality before man; his eyes must not challenge the eyes of the upper caste. No young harijan man can even go to the barber of Jetalpur to get his hair cut, because the barber cuts the hair of Patels, and he will not pollute his metal instruments by the touch of a harijan: in any case, isn't the barber himself a superior caste, so why should he touch the harijan whom even the gods, generally known for magnanimity, have condemned to slavery?

In Jetalpur lived a 24-year-old man called Sakrabhai. He was a bit of a vagabond, sleeping often in the fields, living largely through the grace of a *darbara* family which gave him odd jobs to do. Sakrabhai's passion was singing, and he fancied his voice; he was not too bad actually. Sakrabhai wanted to sing anywhere he could, but normally his only audience would be the sleeping birds. But last year, during *Navratri*, Sakrabhai announced that he would sing at the *garba*—during the festival song and dance and laughter.

A festival for everyone, except harijans. They had no right to sing and dance and laugh during *Navratri*. And Sakrabhai was a harijan. When he tried to sing at the *garba*, he was challenging the past and threatening to begin a different future. There could only be one answer to that: a severe thrashing. He was saved only by the intervention of the caste Hindu family which used to help him. But Sakrabhai had committed a sin which could not really be forgiven—because if it was forgiven then society would not remain the same again, every day one more slave might begin to assert himself...

Between the harijan section and the rest of the village, stands a small church in Jetalpur: four walls and a roof and a cross on the door, built in 1974 by the R.C. Mission. They ran a school here too, for 30 years, and this was the school that harijan children could go to because the missionaries would not allow any discrimination. But then a secular, and presumably socialist also, school was started by the government, and every child now goes to that school, whether caste Hindu or harijan—the difference now being that the harijan child is the object of insult and injury and harassment. There are eight Christian families in Jetalpur today, all originally harijans, but non-christian harijans come to the church too sometimes—for the simple reason that this is the only house of God which will allow them entry: the vast Swami Narayan Mandir has no place for Gandhiji's children of God. So to the church come those harijans in need of solace from a God who has some strange ways of treating his beloved creations.

A poor man's Christmas is not very festive; it cannot be much more than a candle and some bread. It is not noticed by anyone. And it did not interest anyone in particular in Jetalpur; nor was the night of Christmas chosen by the Patels for any symbolic reason. But it was during the night of Christmas—a festival of brotherhood and equality—that a group of Patel boys (all named in a FIR lodged with the police) decided to take their revenge upon that "upstart" called Sakrabhai. Sakrabhai's cousin, Ramanbhai, was sleeping when in the middle of the night four Patel boys of the village woke him up to ask if they could search for their buffalo. Around 1.30 at night, about ten Patel boys came and began searching the harijan areas for this elusive buffalo, which they claimed had been stolen by Sakrabhai. Then they went away. Ramanbhai woke up the next morning, and around seven what should he see but that Sakrabhai had been caught by the Patel boys, and they were dragging him along and beating him: he cried loudly, he wailed for help—but it takes too much courage in rural India to get up and stop a harijan boy from being beaten up by caste Hindus. No one got up to help Sakrabhai. Not even Ramanbhai, who was convinced that Sakrabhai's right leg had already been broken; Sakrabhai was shouting, screaming in pain and terror.

It was seven thirty when the Patel boys managed to drag Sakrabhai into a room in the *panchayat parishad*. All that Ramanbhai had managed to do was follow, along with a few others; they stopped outside the *panchayat parishad* house. The Patel boys locked the doors of the *parishad*. Then they poured kerosene on this young man called Sakrabhai and burnt him to death. People had, by now gathered

Origins of caste

The Indian caste system is not the creation of any particular individual or group, like the Brahmanas, who have stood to gain the most from it. The four-fold division of society was prevelant among the Parsis and the Aryans came to India divided into *gotras* or clans. Aryan society was divided into three groups. The Brahmana-Kshatriya division was along functional lines, one supervised worship and the other fought. The Vaisyas were the residual Aryans who could not be categorised into either of the first two. That took care of the Aryans and the Sudras came to represent the non-Aryans. While the Aryans were nomadic, marriage between their three groups was freely permitted. But as they settleed down among non-Aryans, a taboo slowly developed against inter-racial marriage with the latter. This eventually led to rigidity in definition and exclusivity among the three Aryan groups.

By the time Manu codified social norms and religious practices, the rigidity of the caste system was not only established but also given religious sanction. The duties of the various castes were thereafter set out in great detail by Kautilya in his *Arthashastra*. He enumerated the duties of the Brahmana as (1)*adhyayana* (study), (2) *adhyapana* (teaching), (3) *yajana* (worship), 4) *yajana* (officiating at worship), (5) *dana* (making gifts) and (6) *pratigraha* (accepting gifts). The duties of the Kshatriya comprised (1) *adhyayana*, (2) *yajana*,(3) *dana*, (4) *sastrajiva* (taking up arms as a source of livelihood) and (5) *bhutarakshana* (protection of living beings). The duties of the Vaisya are (1) *adhyayana*, (2)*yajana*,(3) *dana*, (4) *krishi* (agriculture), (5) *pasupalya* (cattle-rearing) and (6) *vanijya* (trade). The functions assigned to the Sudra are (1) *dvijatisusrusha* (menial service of the three twice-born castes), (2) *varta* (production of wealth), (3) *karukarma* (art) and (4) *Kusilavakarma* (crafts).Thus the three higher castes had the common duties of study, worship and making gifts.

These ideas are more or less stereotyped in the *Dharma-sastras*, which reflect the spirit of Vedic literature in all respects, especially in assigning the highest status and dignity to the Brahmanas. In *Manusamhita*, for example, supremacy in every respect is claimed for a Brahmana, though emphasis is also laid on the superior knowledge and qualifications on which that status rests. He must be well versed in his grasp of the Absolute or Brahma (*Brahma-dharana)* and his observance of vows (*niyama-dharana*) and must cultivate universal love. He filled the highest offices of state and society by his character—those of teacher, priest, judge, prime minister, assessor and member of the *Dharma Parishad*, the standing legal commission in the administration. He was punishable in law, but not by capital punishment.

As regards the Sudra, "service was his portion in life." He was not eligible for sacraments (*Samskaras*), nor for hearing sacred texts except their substance. But he was not denied the rites of marriage, cooking of daily food in the *grihya* fires, and funeral ceremonies (*sraddha*). Manu even mentions Sudra teachers and pupils, showing that the Sudra was not denied the right to learning. As representing, however, the lowest level of culture, "a Sudra majority in a country" (*Sudra-bhuyishtham*), it was believed, "would spell its doom."

On the whole the lot of a Sudra was an unenviable one. The formidable array of regulations in the *Manu-smriti* against the Sudra would make dismal reading. He had few privileges and many obligations. The discriminating laws against him and his social disabilities, uttered with brutal frankness, were an inheritance of the past. But Manu treats him exactly like a slave and prescribes barbarous punishments. It was laid down that a Brahmana had to perform the same penance for killing a Sudra as for killing a cat, a frog, a dog, or a crow!

How rigidly were these regulations practised? The Jataka stories describe how the Chandalas were treated as despised outcastes doomed to live outside the city or village, and their very sight was regarded as impure. On one occasion two of them approached the city gate to sell their wares, where two girls of aristocratic birth chanced to meet them on their way to a festival. They regarded it as a bad omen and returned after washing their eyes with perfumed water. The crowd, angry that a gathering where they would have been served free food and drink was disbanded, mercilessly belaboured the two Chandals. Subsequently, concealing their birth, they went to Taxila for study. One of them made good progress but, eventually, their identity was discovered and they were again beaten and driven out. They then went out into the woods, took up an ascetic life, and died soon. This story signals the beginning of untouchability. But as yet the Sudras were not included in this category.

The harijans of Dhetroj who have taken shelter in a nearby village

Like the *Dharma-sutras*,the *Smritis* also sanction intermarriage between males of higher and females of lower castes (i. e. *Anuloma*), but not vice versa (*Pratiloma*). Though Manu clearly supports the marriage of a Brahmana male with a Sudra female, this is expressly condemned in the rules that immediately follow. Such contradictions , which also occur in the *Mahabharata* and *Dharma-sutras*, prove that the practice was looked upon with disfavour and was gradually disappearing.

As regards interdining, Manu lays down that a Brahmana must not eat cooked food (given) by a Sudra who performs no *sraddhas*. This, by implication, shows that food cooked by a Sudra was not absolutely prohibited. But elsewhere in Manu, such food is both permitted and forbidden. Similar contradictions are also found in the *Dharma-sutras*. Manu gives a long list of persons receiving food from whom is forbidden but the restriction is based on considerations of personal virtues not caste. On the whole the idea of untouchability or impurity, even of the Sudras as a caste, was gradually growing, but had not yet become a rigid law or practice. No definite statement is made by Manu about changing one caste for another, but possibilities of such change are at least theoretically conceded. For example, it is laid down in Manu that "if the female issue of a Brahmana male and a Sudra female bears children to one of the highest caste, the inferior (tribe) attains the highest caste within the seventh generation. Thus a Sudra attains the rank of a Brahmana and (in a similar manner) a Brahmana sinks to the level of a Sudra. The same thing happened with the offspring of a Kshatriya or of a Vaisya." This rule merely expands and clarifies the principle enunciated in *Gautama Dharma-sutra*, and indirectly supports the view that intermarriage even between Brahmanas and Sudras was not altogether unknown, and not always so severely condemned as in some rules of Manu and later *Dharma-sutras*.

Ramanbhai, cousin of Sakrabhai, with BSF officer Jayram Verma

outside. The Patel boys explained that all they had done was punish Sakrabhai because he had stolen a *chadar*, a piece of cloth to cover himself (not that even this allegation was ever substantiated).

We went to Jetalpur only on 12 March; in the meantime a lurid agitation by caste Hindus had set the whole problem of caste on its head. Largely because of the agitation by casteist Hindus, and the fact that harijans refused to surrender completely (as was expected) to the attacks on them, a train of politicians and government media had trooped through the roads of Jetalpur, and everyone had called on Jetalpur and promised justice etc, etc. Ramanbhai, who is not only prepared but eager to give evidence in court, has been given police protection to ensure his "safety." The BSF's 104 Batallion, under inspector Jayram Verma (a most honest and sincere man), has turned up. But behind all this is another story—a story captioned 'Where *will* you escape? How long can the government protect you? One day, these uniforms will go—then what?'

Sakrabhai's father, Premabhai Alabhai, stares blankly at the world; perhaps he has been doing that for a very long while. Hunger and atrocity have drained all meanings from his mind, perhaps he has no concept of any difference between life and death, it does not seem to mean anything in particular to him that his young son has died. He used to beg to survive before, he still begs to eat what he can: someone gives the old man something or the other. Surely he cannot be as old as he looks; his son was only 24. But hunger is a very corrosive acid, it melts the bones and leaves deep rivulets on the skin, and it puts a yellow film across watery eyes and finally hunger rapes the heart and kills the mind.

Ramanbhai, and the other harijan youth, do not want to become Premabhai Alabhai; they want to wear watches, and go to barbers. Ramanbhai has got a job in a bank, thanks to reservation, but what about the others? There are graduates among the harijans of Jetalpur, graduates created not by money or by right, but created by dreams, and these graduates still have to work as farm labourers. After the publicity given to the death of Sakrabhai, the Patels are taking revenge in the way they know best—by squeezing the harijans economically, refusing to given them anything but the minimal amount of work. The only caste Hindus who are helping the harijans are the *darbaras*, but how long can they go on doing so, they themselves are poor. What can the harijans do? One answer has already been floated from the Patel side: compromise, give false evidence so that the Patel boys who murdered Sakrabhai are not convicted, and the sustenance for the slaves will return.

Our last stop on our journey away from Jetalpur was on the upper floor of a typical well-off home. "Come and have a cup of caste tea," said our young host with a mischievous smile (the reference of course was to the fact that we had willingly tasted water and tea with the harijans). But there was not much banter when we went up. The Patel leaders were there,. and there was the excitement of war in their eyes; their voices rose easily; their accusations of ingratitude against harijans might have sounded reasonable to differently tuned ears. But the most interesting thing of all was their explanation of how Sakrabhai had died. The Patel boys had not killed him, we were told with brazen obstinacy; Sakrabhai had actually, they said, committed suicide in order to embarrass the Patel youth who had beaten him up.

One wonders: will that be the eventual verdict of the "authority" too?

THE AGITATION

Jetalpur was a cinder, another cinder thrown into the large fire that has been burning in harijan hearts. They did not react to Jetalpur with any organised violence, but the word spread, and this time government assurances of "justice" left them unmoved.

In the meantime, something else had happened—at the political level. In January 1980, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, without a Jagjivan Ram in her pack of cards and needing a man to represent the community which had always voted for her, even in the fiasco of 1977, picked up a young and loyal member of the Rajya Sabha and made him the minister of state for home, with charge of harijan affairs among his other duties. This immediately made Yogendra Makwana the most important harijan minister in Delhi, even though he did not have the rank of a cabinet minister. It was not long before Yogendra Makwana began to see himself as the Jagjivan Ram of the coming decades. His biggest achievement of his first year in power was pushing through a special component plan of Rs 500 crores in the sixth five year plan—and this was the banner he was going to carry.

He had started another launching pad, an organisation which he himself had started, the Anusuchit Jati Janjati Parishad, and using his vantage position in power units began sprouting up across the country. The rise and spread of Yogendra Makwana was watched closely in Ahmedabad, not only by his rival for harijan affections, Narsibhai Makwana, but also by leaders like chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki. Solanki and Yogendra Makwana had been friends once, but the price that power extracted from them was rivalry: Solanki, quite understandably, had no desire whatsoever to see anyone in Delhi pulling at his chair—particularly not the younger man called Yogendra Makwana.

In December last year, Makwana called a statewide conference of his harijan organisation. His devotees say that more than 20,000 harijans came; his critics put the figure at less, but there is general agreement that this was a bit of a success. (Narsibhai Makwana immediately organised a harijan conference of his own; it was, comparatively, a damp squib.) Yogendra Makwana now began the process of becoming a national leader, spreading his organisation into UP, MP, Rajasthan, Bihar, and even Kerala.

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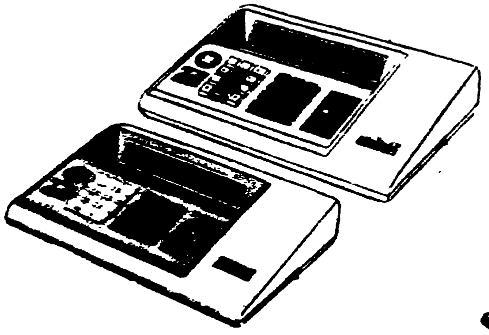

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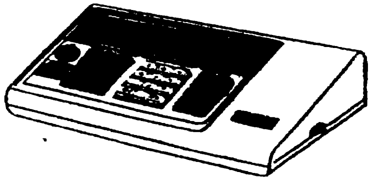

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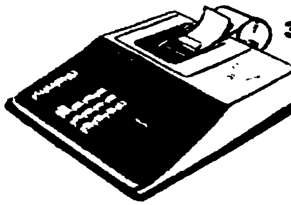

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Ahmedabad Tel [illegible]

Makwana's supporters allege that certain caste Hindu leaders even within the Congress(I) initially encouraged the medical students to launch their agitation against reservation (the chief minister was not part of this silly and dangerous game) in a small bid to tell Mr Makwana where exactly he could get off. Hari Prasad Vyas, the husband of health minister Kokila Vyas, is among those who are said to have encouraged the medical students in the beginning. Whatever be the truth, whoever may have patted the students on the back then, nobody seemed to realise then what exactly could happen, how dangerous this fire could be.

The potential for such a caste war exists not only in Gujarat, but all over the country—as the demonstrations and slogans against reservation in neighbouring Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh bear witness. Ours is a collapsing economy; there are no more easy jobs, and in such a situation caste Hindus are bound to simply close their eyes to the whole truth—the truth that the harijans, denied of confidence, education, money, opportunity, self-respect, will never get the smallest chance if they are not given a little help—so that they may retain their monopoly on jobs and privileges.

Gujarat's was a dangerous fire; it could spread so easily to the villages, where the upper castes, sole owners of land, needed the harijan as slaves to protect their diminishing earnings. An excuse was what everyone needed to crush the awakening harijan spirit so that it may go back to its age-old dormancy before it had time to really rise—and three decades of a liberal constitution and liberal policies had begun to make that slight, very slight, difference. Suddenly in a hospital where the harijan had only been the sweeper or the corpse carrier, harijan doctors began to become visible; harijan teachers started appearing in medical colleges—true, only two harijan teachers out of 131 in Baroda, but still two, and two was two more than nothing, here were two jobs which should have gone to the Shahs and Patels and Desais and Bhats, what business did the Makwanas and Parmars have in such a place—good lord, tomorrow the harijan surgeon might even begin to earn Rs 5000 a day, he might break into that closed racket which the medical profession sometimes becomes.

Harijans must know their place. That is it. That is the agitation.

NOBODY IS LISTENING

Whoever else may or may not have known about the potential dangers which the agitation could cause, the students and their leaders were clear enough about what they wanted to do, and what they wanted to do was put an end to any benefits which the harijans had. If this had not been their aim, the agitation would have ended almost as soon as it started, for the simple reason that the government gave in to all their original demands. Some would say that the government gave in too easily; in any case it gave in. But the students, instead of being satisfied, became arrogant. All subsequent efforts to calm the agitation, made by either the government or certain opposition leaders, were spurned. The aim of the students was simple: to continue the fight till government and public sector employees (for instance in the banks and LIC) were drawn in, till the villages caught fire, till the poison spread to other states.

And the press helped. Just one story will suffice. One large newspaper carried lurid details of harijans having raped caste Hindu women at a marriage reception. A 12-year-old girl had been raped, said the newspaper, 12 girls were missing. Rumours took over, passions rose; the word was spread in the villages that the harijans had committed this "atrocity," that this was the surest example of the new attitude of the harijans (who do *they* think they are?). A crowd collected at the Vadilal Sarabhai Hospital where the rape vic-

If this is liberation, is it worth it? Both old and young women are commonly seen in Ahmedabad pulling carts overladen with goods

Will someone give Bina a job?

Binabehn Muljibhai Parmar is an MA in sociology, a degree she took four years ago. She has never failed in her academic life, always either passing in the first or second divisions. She has applied to a large number of firms for any kind of job; she has applied to the government—but despite all this talk of reservation, and all this talk of there being not enough educated harijans to fill even the available posts, Bina does not yet have a job. She is a harijan; and among the poorest of the poor.

Her father met us in his one-room hut in Jetalpur; the clothes on his back were in tatters; he sat on his haunches, and had very little to say. What could he say? How much could he complain? Bina has to support her aged parents, and she is often forced to make enough money for a meal by working as a labourer on the land. This is not a very encouraging sight—particularly for the very young harijans who are being taught that education is the gate to liberation: if this is all what the years of sacrifice by Bina's parents and her own struggle to convert her ability into a degree has achieved, then what is the point of education?

Binabehn, the MA in sociology who is forced to work as a labourer

Bina's story challenges the myth that jobs are simply waiting for harijans to go out and grab them. That is just not true. Harijans are still, despite the marginal benefits granted by the central reservation policy, defeated by the problems that have defeated them for centuries—the main one being lack of confidence. Bina, who lives in Jetalpur, Ahmedabad district, is not a girl without confidence. But she certainly is a lady without any luck.

Harijan houses burnt in Dhetroj

tims were supposedly being treated.

The truth was that no such thing had ever happened: this was complete concoction. Similar was the case of the report that harijans had attacked the biggest and oldest Jain temple in Ahmedabad at Gomtipur. The story was completely untrue—but it served its purpose, which was to inflame the Jain community.

I had asked one harijan leader, who belongs to the Congress(I), why they did not contradict such stories immediately. His reply was simple: "They don't publish what we say...We have reached a point where we don't even want to talk...Nobody is listening."

DHETROJ

India does not have a silent majority. It has a number of silent minorities, treated with varying degrees of contempt and tolerance by other bands of minorities who have managed to acquire political, social and economic power thanks to accidents of birth, natural consequence of history and a pernicious set of social laws perpetrated in some cruel past and preserved into a cruel present. And of all the minorities, harijans and tribals are surely the worst off. On every harijan face lie the scars of a condemned race; the eyes talk not only about a hungry, very hungry stomach, but also of spit on the face and shit on the head.

In some stray corners, though, a little change has finally come. Ahmedabad is a boom city; its textile and other mills have helped make Gujarat the second most industrialised state in the country. And the harijans, who have little land, have found jobs in textile mills which enable them to keep the fire burning in their homes, which enable them to start thinking of an education for their children—and these are luxuries which their brethren in most other parts of the country do not enjoy.

Dhetroj, like Jetalpur, can hardly be called a village. A two-hour drive from Ahmedabad, it is large and prosperous, with a population of around 10,000. But there is one important difference between Jetalpur and Dhetroj: the harijans of Dhetroj are much better off. They still live away from the others, in a corner-but there are solid houses in this corner, there is a cooperative housing estate, even the poor of this harijan community seem to have enough for two meals.

On 15 February, a harijan teacher told us, a group of urban youth came to Dhetroj and apparently told them about the counter—revolution that was sweeping the city: what was Dhetroj, with its huge Patel population, doing at this hour? Sleeping? Tch, tch. The message was received and understood. On the sixteenth there were two harijan marriages; the decorations were attacked by caste Hindu youth. But things returned to normal after that, for a while.

Until the evening of 27 February. Dusk had fallen and the harijans were sitting down to their evening meal when the first attack came: a heap of grass collected for cattle was burnt down. The harijans, realising that trouble was ahead but not knowing what to do, put out the fire and began collecting at one or two points. Then some caste Hindus, armed, entered the harijan area and began abusing the harijans. Suddenly a dangerous sound was heard, the sound of an old war cry, and the roll of the drum calling upon people to attack. And a horde of caste Hindu youth, armed with spears and knives and hatchets, carrying kerosene, entered the harijan locality and started setting the houses on fire and looting. The din that they created must have been heard miles away, but the police in an outpost opposite the village did not stir, for quite a while, until the arson had taken its toll, and then turned up to disperse the mob. (When we went to meet the police officer in charge at Dhetroj, he brusquely refused to answer any questions; his silence was perhaps understandable, but his rudeness was not—but of course policemen like him cannot be touched by the government.)

When the mob had disappeared, the harijans, around 700 in number, picked up whatever belongings they could and started their *hijri* (an Arabic word, which has crept into Gujarati, meaning flight). They had hardly gone more than a kilometre when they came across a village called Kukwao, where the *darbaras* (caste Hindus themselves, akin to the *thakurs* of the north, but with far less wealth; in fact, they themselves are considered economically backward, and are hostile to the Patels, who are the really dominant caste of Gujarat) offered them shelter, food and protection. All over Gujarat, *darbaras* have been the only ones who have helped the harijans; many observers feel that without this protection, the plight of the harijans would have been much, much worse. One reason is that the darbaras identify with the chief minister, and he has staked his government on this issue.

When we went there, not one caste Hindu wanted to discuss what had happened. The evidence was in front of our eyes—the empty, burnt and looted harijan houses. But no one remaining in Dhetroj claimed to have any knowledge of what had happened; no one certainly had any remorse. It was an interesting conspiracy of silence. This silence was broken only by some teenagers returning from their high school—kids. We asked them if they would welcome the harijans back to Dhetroj. Of course we all know that the government will ensure that the harijans eventually go back, but the kids spoke a greater truth when they answered, "Welcome them back? This time we will ensure that not even tea reached them if they are forced upon us."

SABARMATI

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's ashram overlooks a now empty Sabarmati, aborted somewhere upstream by a twentieth century dam. Some conventional photographs in a museum highlight moments of his life; his old residence contains a few of his meagre possessions. A peacock struts about on the lawns; soon the sun will dip away into another world, and the gates of the ashram will be closed. On one wall will remain, unread, a prayer which no one has prayed for a long, long time, Gandhiji's prayer, *Hey namrata ke sagar:*

Lord of humility dwelling in a little pariah hut, help us to search for Thee throughout that fair land watered by Ganga, Brahmaputra and Jamuna, give us receptivenes, give us openheartedness, give us Thy humility, give us the ability and willingness to identify ourselves with the masses of India, O God, who helps only when man feels utterly humble, grant that we may not be isolated from the people. We should serve as servants and friends. Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice, embodiments of godliness, humility personified, that we may know the land better and love it more. ■

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Colourful Karanjia's breakthrough daily

They used to gather in the evenings at Jal Patel's house, and the conversation was the typical jibe-and-take of journalists. Someone told Russy Karanjia, the high-profile editor of *Blitz*, "RK, you've been supporting Russia, but you still have not managed to get an interview with Krushchev." Frank Moraes was there, and he offered Russy Karanjia a case of Scotch if he could get an interview with Krushchev within three months. It began as a bit of a joke, but Russy Karanjia took up the challenge.

He approached the Soviet ambassador in Delhi, and was told, quite truthfully, that Krushchev did not believe in giving individual interviews. Karanjia then went to Cairo to meet his friend Nasser. Nasser had just jailed the communists in Egypt, and in the interview to *Blitz* he attacked the Soviet Union bitterly. Karanjia then went to London, and met the Soviet ambassador there. The case he presented was simple. he himself was a socialist and a friend of the USSR, and it pained him to see Nasser so critical of the Soviets. Could anything be done? If the Soviet Union was interested in friendship with Nasser and Egypt, why didn't Krushchev say so through the columns of *Blitz*? The Soviet ambassador to UK forwarded the request.

Russy Karanjia did not have to wait long. Suddenly one day in London, six commissars turned up, virtually bundled him onto the plane, and before he knew it he was in front of Krushchev. He interviewed Krushchev for three hours, broken into two sessions because Krushchev had to go to the airport to welcome Soekarno. (Krushchev laced the interview with excellent vodka.) It was in this interview that Krushchev promised to build the Aswan dam for Egypt as a gesture of friendship. So Russy Karanjia got his case of Scotch, Egypt got the Aswan dam—and Nasser, in gratitude, also gave Russy Karanjia the highest honour of Egypt.

Such has been the life of Russy Karanjia.

The first controversy that Russy Karanjia was involved in had nothing to do with marxism, or fatcat racketeers, or even the Shah of Iran, neither was there anything particularly frank, free and fearless about it. The controversy was about Hollywood films, starting with a letter that Russy Karanjia wrote to the staid columns of the *Times of India*. Karanjia was only a first year college student then, but already he was responding to the scent of excitement that wafts around controversy. And, some would say typically, he fuelled that controversy himself by writing bogus letters to the *Times*, abusing his own original letter. It was a prank, but it took him straight into the heart of journalism; he landed his first job, and where else but in the *Times*?

Controversy: that word would soon become synonymous with Russy Karanjia, the man who would send an inexpensive tabloid weekly into a record number of ordinary Indian homes and on the other hand, also into the hushed rooms from where the rulers of many nations directed the affairs of their peoples. Karanjia has now spent more than four decades in racket-busting, muck-raking journalism, a style he introduced and took to powerful heights. And if occasionally Russy himself got a little busted, or someone began throwing muck back at him, well, that was part of the game, wasn't it? But whatever happened, Russy Karanjia, who has seen governments come and go, friends rise to supreme power and then lose it, who has seen great mentors succumb to the call of age, retained his smile with the aplomb of a buccaneer—wearing his beautifully tailored shirts, getting his fingers carefully manicured, keeping his face an envy of health clubs.

And now, at an age when others might want to retire to a life rid of tensions, Russy Karanjia is putting all his efforts and energies into a major new editorial effort: he is starting a daily English newspaper from Bombay. Such an adventure has not really happened in recent memory: daily newspapers in English have closed or withered; no one has started a major English daily from a city like Bombay. Only a man with a gambler's courage, a professional's skill and a young man's energy could even begin to think of such a venture. Russy Karanjia had all three when as a very young man he started *Blitz*, he apparently still has all these qualities when as an aged man he is starting the paper he has named, very simply, *The Daily*. And this venture is in a city which already has perhaps the best that English daily journalism can offer in the country: the venerable and rich *Times of India*, the adolescent but secure *Indian Express*, and the *Free Press Journal*, all with well-protected markets and better-protected advertising lineage. However, Karanjia was convinced of one simple thing—that Bombay was bored by this "quality" journalism, and that these papers did not give Bombay the attention it deserved.

In addition to a press and journalists (brought over amidst some controversy from the *Indian Express*; a virtual convoy of both desk and reporting staff deserted the Bombay wing of Ramnath Goenka's empire), Russy Karanjia had also acquired something he considered very valuable indeed. a son-in-law. Karl Mehta dresses as nattily as his father-in-law. both of them seem walking advertisements of Charagh Din, the makers of expensive signed shirts in Bombay. Mehta became friendly with Russy's daughter Rita Karanjia almost a decade ago, they got married in 1977 (they have a two year old daughter called Farah. Named after the Shah of Iran's wife? I asked. No, replied Karl Mehta stoically). Mehta was a purser then with Air India, but it did not take him very long to join his wife in his father-in-law's small empire. These two would inherit the empire, so it was only logical that they learnt how it worked. Mehta now manages the business, and was instrumental in setting up the infrastructure for *The Daily*. He seems confident about its success too: he claims that the initial print order will be 40,000 copies and the graph will climb to 80,000 in three months—at which point they will stop increasing the circulation. The optimism of youth is very refreshing.

Incidentally, long ago Russy Karanjia edited a daily tabloid in Bombay. In the late 1930s, under Hamilton, he had begun the *Morning Standard*, and it immediately picked up 30,000 buyers, which was a pretty big circulation in those days. But the vagaries of Hamilton's spending and the weak livers of the financiers (those were the troubled pre-world war II days) managed to close down the *Morning Standard*. Ever since then Russy Karanjia has wanted to give Bombay the kind of paper he thinks Bombay needs. In March 1981, the dream has finally come true. It remains to be seen how long the dream will survive.

Daily *editor-in-chief, R. K. Karanjia makes a point to the editorial staff*

PHOTOGRAPHS OF *DAILY* OFFICE BY FEROZE MISTRY

“Publish and be damned”

Russy Karanjia, the editor of Blitz *has created history and fulfilled his old ambition with the launching of the Bombay tabloid,* The Daily. *In this exclusive interview with* **M. J. Akbar** *he speaks of his beginnings as a journalist, his hopes, his political leanings and his philosophy of life.*

Q: How did you get into journalism?

A: By accident. I had graduated from Wilson College (Bombay) and I was booked for Cambridge University. I had old-fashioned parents, you know, and they expected me to go to Cambridge and then join the civil service. I was too young for admission and I had to wait for one year, so I started my post-graduate course at Bombay University. Being bored, I wrote a letter to the *Times of India*. And this letter created a controversy.

Q: What kind of controversy?

A: It was something to do with Hollywood—films. To add to the controversy, I began writing letters replying to my own letters—great fun, you know. Then by accident I met Ivor Jehu, one of the editors of the *Times of India*, at a party: he was the number two. We fell into a conversation and he asked me what I was doing, and I said I was writing bogus letters to the *Times of India*. He was shocked: he was in charge of the letters page, and he said he'd report me to the police for fraud etc—anyway, he said, I should see him the next day. By the time I'd finished, I'd got a job. They sent me to the proofreaders' desk to start. Then I was a reporter, became a sub-editor, and then special correspondent. Jehu was very fond of me, and since he was also the correspondent of many London papers, he used to pass on assignments for British papers—including *The Times*—to me. I remember one scoop: there was the story of a British lord who came to India and disappeared. I was able to find him out. he had stayed back in one of the princely states because he had become some maharajah or nawab's boyfriend.

Then they wanted me to do a story on someone called the Fakir, in north-west frontier, who was supposed to be keeping the British army occupied with his guerilla warfare. I was going to Quetta on a holiday anyway, my grandfather was in Quetta, and he knew everyone there. I discovered that this story of the Fakir was a myth, a lie to feed the press and people with dramatic stories. So I said, fine, if they want to feed the press with myths, I'll also join in. I came back to Bombay and told Jehu that there was no story, but one could always be cooked up. He said, 'Let's see what you can do.' So I went to the Bombay docks area, got half a dozen strapping *pathans*, borrowed a gun from the Wadias, and photographed the “Fakir” sitting with a gun with half a dozen *pathans* around him. There was also a fantasised interview and it was all published in the mass-circulated British paper *People* on page one. I got my highest payment for that story: one thousand rupees.

Oh, we had a lot of such incidents. Once, the maharaja of Patiala who was chancellor of the chamber of princes then, called a top secret meeting of princes at Bombay's town hall, where the press could not go. There was a total ban. My editor asked me if I could get the story. I tried my best, I had some friends, but could not get permission to enter. So ultimately I decided to become a prince myself. My father had a beautiful stick with a gold handle, presented to him by the Amir of Afghanistan. I borrowed a Rolls Royce from one of the companies, drove up and, swishing my cane, walked in. This story appeared on the front page of the *Times of India* and all the British papers.

When Hamilton (a well-known journalist of the 1930s and '40a) left the *Times of India*, he started the *Sunday Standard*; he had a couple of editors from Fleet Street with him. One day Hamilton came desperately to my house—he and I used to know each other—and asked me if I could help. He offered me a “first class job” if I would help out. What was wrong, I asked. The editor was drunk, he replied.

So that was my opportunity. I went to the office, and as soon as the other staff of the *Sunday Standard* saw me they walked out. Hamilton and I worked through the whole of Saturday and of Saturday night and brought out the *Sunday Standard*. Hamilton thought it was a fine piece of work, and immediately made me the deputy editor. Later I became editor, and also started the *Morning Standard*.

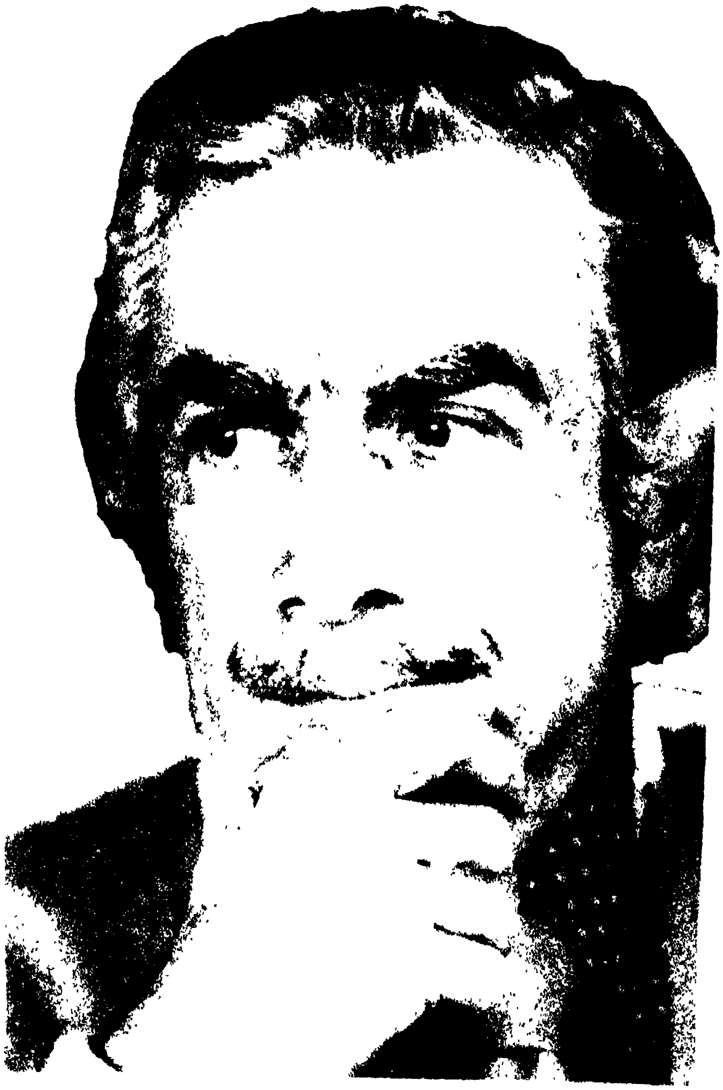
Q: Later, this became the Indian Express.

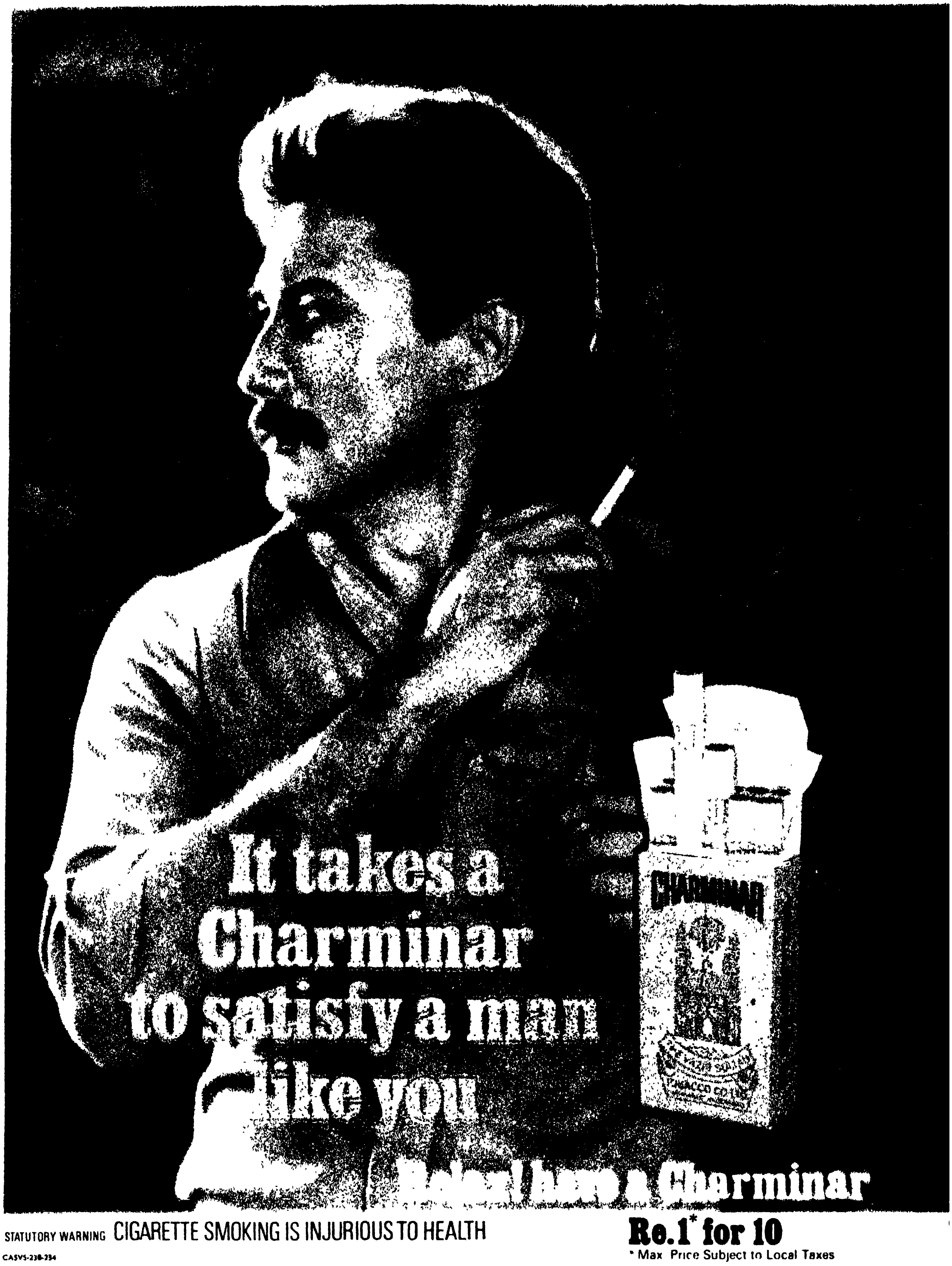
A: Yes; then Goenka took it over. We used to have a lot of touble: every day we needed money. We didn't have any capital. That is one of the great difficulties of *Blitz* too. We started *Blitz* on a capital of Rs 5,000. We have very little capital. For this venture (the daily newspaper) too I have borrowed all the money. All through the life of *Blitz* we have had difficulties. But every time someone has knocked me down, I have comeback. Take the time when we walked out of the High Court because the judge showed such partiality to Devdas Gandhi, who was against us. 'Sit down Mr Gandhi, please have coffee... mango juice please...you look tired' and on and on the judge went. We walked out in protest and *in absentia* we were fined Rs 10,000. My partners did not like this kind of thing, so they deserted me.

It was Horniman who taught us to dare, to publish and be damned. He provided us with the legal guts and knowledge. Every time a partner left, my share in the company increased; when Mehta left I became the sole proprietor of *Blitz* and from then somehow *Blitz* began looking up.

Q: There is talk that you have got Arab petrodollars to help out with the daily newspaper you are starting.

A: Rubbish. *Blitz* has made enough profits to start a new publication. It contributed Rs 7 lakhs for the new publication. Central Bank of India loaned us Rs 24.93 lakhs for all the machines, and we propose to collect, by way of





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The Daily *editorial board meeting*

advertisements, another Rs 10 lakhs.

Q: People keep saying such things because you have a bad name regarding relationships with foreign governments.

A: So far as Nasser was concerned, Jawaharlal Nehru himself introduced me to him: after such an introduction I could not have made a single pie out of my relationship with him. Yes, they paid if they took out any supplements in *Blitz*. Every year we had a supplement, and we got something like Rs 2 lakhs, which was the normal price. It is all on record. Similarly with the Shah of Iran, the other big friendship. There again, it was Lal Bahadur Shastri. I remember he said something to the effect that when your neighboud is your enemy, make sure that your neighbour's neighbour becomes a friend. I was able to help Shastri out because of my relationship with Nasser. Indonesia's Soekarno once put him into a tight corner over a resolution at an Afro-Asian conference in Cairo, on Kashmir. I rang up Nasser in his bedroom since he had already gone to sleep, and he said, "Don't worry. I want the friendship of your Prime Minister. He is a very nice man, and I shall do the needful."

At the moment I have cooled to the Arabs. They are not able to do anything. They are so utterly helpless. I mean, just one little nation like Israel is smashing up Lebanon, and Arabs are not doing anything except fighting amongst themselves. It is a terrible situation.

Q: What do you hope your newspaper The Daily *will achieve—apart from fulfilling an old ambition of yours?*

A: Ambition, yes. But it will also fill a vacuum. Bombay has no newspaper it can call its own. Bombay does not have voice. I organised the Save Bombay Committee. And we found the press just would not give the publicity due to an orgainsation which had literally saved Bombay—saved the Oval maidan, for instance. I got Mrs Gandhi to personally intervene against the then chief minister Mr V. P. Naik and stop the orgy of the highrise building racket. But the Save Bombay Committee got no publicity—and I don't blame the press, really; they are all national dailies. *Blitz* itself is a national weekly. We haven't got the space for Bombay news and Bombay is rotting. It is being sent to destruction from every side: the government, the corporation. There is corruption. During my career I have realised that newspapers do not make money; they make power. And if power can be used for a good purpose...Bombay has given me everything; I came to Bombay before I was ten.

Q: What do you think of Bombay's existing English dailies?

A: First of all, they are old-fashioned. The *Times of India* is the Old Lady of Bori Bunder, and the age shows. It hasn't changed with the changing times. Except for removing classified advertisements from the front page, it is the same old Victorian journal.

We need a powerful press to fight the battle for Bombay's citizens. We must make *The Daily* the paper of our readers. *Blitz* started on nothing but readers' letters. I had no staff, no money, nothing. Readers gave us our frontpage stories. Readers gave us the money to fight the big cases. Once the people have faith in you...

Q: Your personality has dominated Blitz: Blitz *is Karanjia really. How much is your personality going to dominate the daily?*

A: It is not. I won't write much. I may change a headline: my reader, the middle class, the lower middle class reader must be able to understand the headline—that's my instinct.

Q: Is it going to be a leftist and crusading paper?

A: Of course.

Q: Then why should you expect the capitalists and industrialists to support you and your paper with advertising and finance? Will it not be in the interests of the capitalists to kill the paper right now, when it has just started, when it is much easier to do so.

A: They will not kill it, I hope. I think the industry will support the paper. The Tatas and others supported the Save Bombay campaign, because the more intelligent among the industrialists realise that this kind of order, where one half is pitted against the other (which is the subject of my first editorial) will not do. On one side of the street you have the beautiful new council hall—an absolute waste. Across the street, only a month ago, lived about 5,000 people who built the council hall, the workers, and they were shunted out with such vengeance—it forced me to repeatedly say that if such things continue, Bombay will burn. These people—let a George Fernandes or a Sharad Joshi come to their rescue, and it will not be a Rasta Roko agitation anymore, it will be a City Roko demand. Already things have started happening. Middle class Maharashtrians who did not get water for three days in Girgaum paralysed the city—and got their water in half an hour.

Q: But you yourself belong to the rich half of Bombay.

A: I do, yes—but Nehru too belonged to the rich half. *Blitz* is my test. We have fought all the seven devils—of monopoly, capitalism etc—and survived.

Q: Survived to become the most colourful journalist in the business today.

A: Is that why industrialists advertise in *Blitz*? People have called me red, people have called me yellow, people have given me all kinds of colours. Once I put a hoarding outside this office. We put all the colours of the world, and the caption said, "Thank God, at least we are read." They abuse me because I started racket busting. When I started journalism, the *Times of India* would not use the word "diarrhoea" because the British *memsahibs* would get nausea if they read this word over their breakfast. They made efforts to destroy every leftist paper. But I survived, and once you survive...today they've accepted me. Tatas started *Current* against me. Dosu Karaka, my colleague, a very dear friend of mine, a man whom I loved, was taken away from here to start *Current*. Ultimately Karaka came back to me; he died working for me. There was R. P. Aiyar. S. K. Patil took R. P. Aiyar from *Blitz* and gave him a paper called *Conch*. The *Conch* even published my bedroom gossip with my wife. R. P. Aiyar eventually came back here, worked ten years for me before dying. He wrote some of the most beautiful stuff we published. That's life.

They say that as long as you are unsuccessful you are a communist; once a communist becomes successful he becomes a capitalist. So far as I am concerned, ever since I went as a war correspondent to central Europe in 1945, '46, '47, from Finland right down to Yugoslavia and Greece, and

I agree with Churchill that consistency is the virtue of donkeys. I don't believe in consistency of leadership; I only believe in consistency of principles

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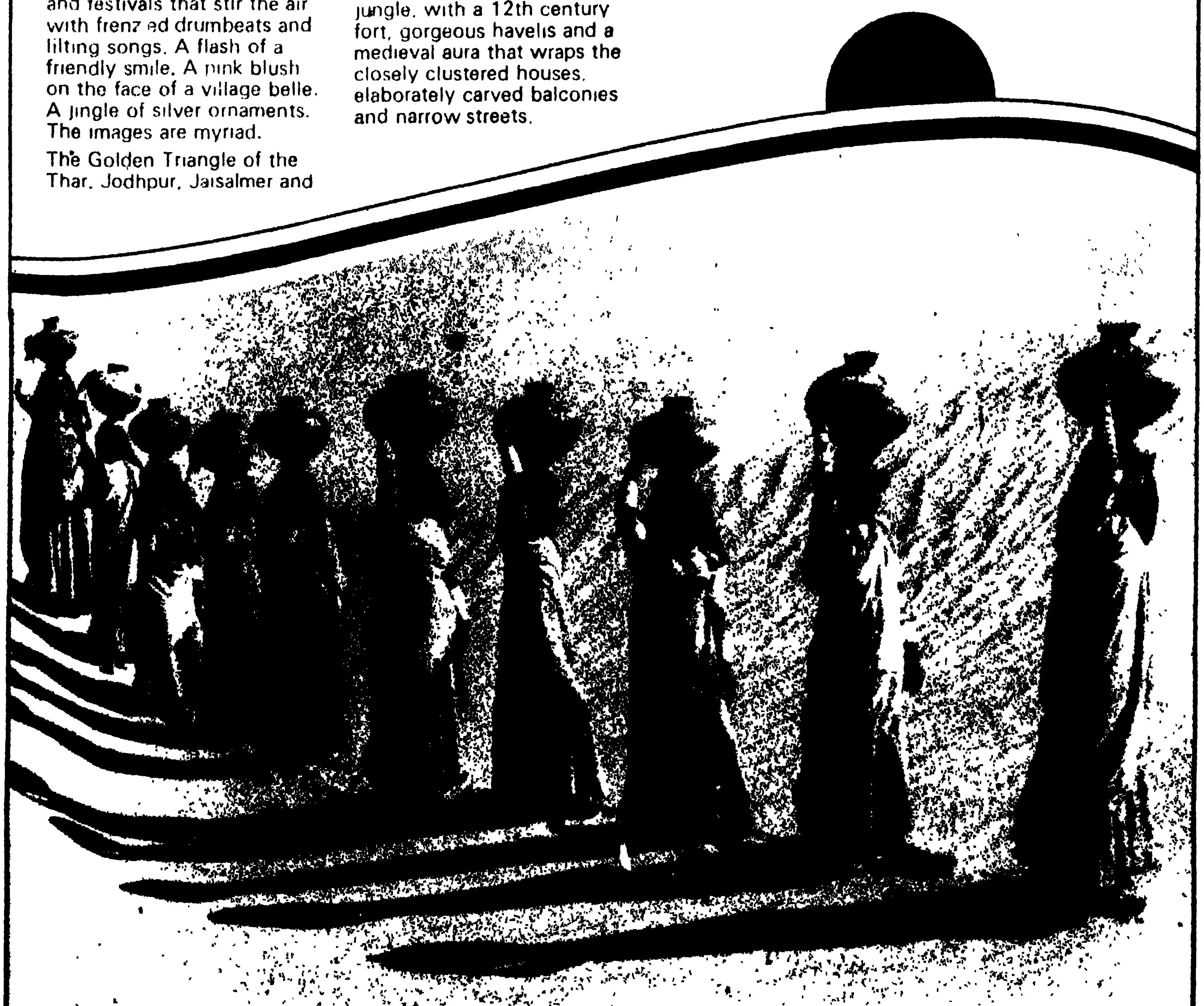
The Thar is beautiful. The sands that turn into gold under the sun The crisp, salubrious air that rolls on the dunes Forts, palaces, havelis and battlements that whisper the tales of glory and gallantry Temples which are a fusion of faith and beauty. A sudden rainbow of birds in the sky. Or a caravan of camels emerging, far away, on the scarlet horizon. The folk-life rich with colours and tales Fairs and festivals that stir the air with frenzied drumbeats and lilting songs. A flash of a friendly smile. A pink blush on the face of a village belle. A jingle of silver ornaments. The images are myriad.

The Golden Triangle of the Thar. Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner - adventure, curiosity and fairy tales

Jodhpur with its massive fort, marble cenotaph of Maharaja Jaswant Singh, Indian bustard in the zoo, and the bazars overflowing with exquisite handicrafts. Bikaner with the fort of Raja Rai Singh distinguished by its thirty-seven pavilions, the slow-pace life and the humming caravan routes. And Jaisalmer, a landmark in the wilderness of undulating sands and scrub jungle, with a 12th century fort, gorgeous havelis and a medieval aura that wraps the closely clustered houses, elaborately carved balconies and narrow streets.



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Continental/RT/381

I saw this wonderful new experiment called socialism, I have worked for the left. Whatever I may be, I am not a captialist.

Q: But are you an opportunist?

A: Yes; who's not? Opportunist in the sense that when opportunity comes I take it and wrestle with it. Today, one opportunity has come. I have got a press and can start a daily. I may be an opportunist but not in the bad sense of term.

Q: You tend to support the government in power.

A: Am I supporting Mrs Indira Gandhi right now? The government was thinking of suing me for breach of the Cabinet Secrets Act after we published the story about the Thal-Vaishet fertiliser deal.

Q: What about the Emergency?

A: I supported the Emergency because Rajni Patel and Siddhartha Shankar Ray came to my house, showed me the 20-point programme, and convinced me that with all these people around—who were also my friends, Madhu Limaye George Fernandes, etc—it was not possible to push such a programme into action. Now, to me a programme which serves the poor means more than personalities.

I did not think the Emergency was going to be the death of democracy. I was solemnly assured that it was for only six months. *Blitz* was put under censorship because I exposed Sanjay Gandhi's destruction of the Turkman Gate area. Then we took an interview with CPI leader Rajeshwar Rao. The government told me I could not publish it. I insisted on publishing it—at the Chandigarh session the CPI set up a stall to sell *Blitz*.

Q: Don't you think Blitz *has a credibility problem?*

A: May have. I agree with Churchill that consistency is the virtue of donkeys. I don't believe in consistency of leadership; I only believe in consistency of principles. And where have I failed in my principle of serving the poor and the weak? Show me one example. Every cause, even from the Telengana days, we took up. I was probably the journalist friendliest to Nehru; I used to have regular monthly interviews with him; two books have been published; but we suported the Telengana movement. One of my boys, Daruwalla, died in the struggle; he was a communist. I don't think any poor man will call me inconsistent.

Q: Did you have to do a lot of running around to get the financing for The Daily?

A: No. I mean, now we have come to be recognised as, and I dislike the use of that word, a power. Maybe a poor power in the monetary sense, but to me money has never mattered—probably because I have never felt any need for it. I will be frank with you. I was brought up by my grandfather who owned half of Quetta. My father was a top opthalmic surgeon. My mother has a lot of property in Bombay—of which I have no share at all; she's alive. Money does not matter to me. I have run the paper into trouble. If I had wanted I could have settled defamation cases for less, but I did not think in terms of money, I thought in terms of justice and my rights So we have always opposed authority.

Q: For a leftist like you, isn't it strange that you are publishing Sai Baba's preaching?

A: I am, broadly, a marxist. But communists failed in this country because they never tried to plant the roots of this foreign plant deep into Indian soil. This country has a tremendous spiritual heritage; it is fantastic. I have lately gone into this because of *yoga*. Once I started *yoga* it took me into many occult experiences. For example, we two are sitting here and there is so much cosmic energy around us and we don't know how to use it. All this has led me to Indian philosophy, and I find in Sai Baba some kind of manifestation of cosmic energy.

Q: You have also started believing in astrology.

A: I believe it is a science, which we have lost—again a part of our tremendous spiritual heritage. Not only I, but great thinkers also believe in it. Once, we went with Nehru to meet Einstein in New York during some summit meeting. The great scientist, that great physicist had become a metaphysicist. Einstein believed that the same cosmic force which created him and therefore enabled human beings to create the atom bomb, had also created Gandhiji with his non-violence. And he told Nehru that since he was the descendant of Gandhiji he must fight for peace, to use non-violence against the atom bomb. But I am not spiritual in the decadent sense of the word, because I have become old, or senile. You know I am hardly that kind of man. I am modern, I am scientific, I believe in all the pleasures of life—I eat, I drink, I do everything.

Q: You told me a story once of a man who predicted your near-death.

A: Yes, He is here at Sandhurst Road, Bombay. He measures your shadow in the sun, and reads your *janmapatra*. You will be amazed. There is a person like that in Punjab also. Most of the foreign dignitaries who come—from the communist world or the capitalist world, or whether it is the Shah of Iran...they all go to consult fortune tellers.

I stopped. I didn't want it. The thing was so damned correct! He said I died at the age of nine (which was true; my mother had given me up for dead), and he said I would die again at the age of 60 but because my Jupiter was so powerful I would survive. It would be a miracle but I would survive. I was 58 then. Within two years it did hapen. I went to sleep perfectly healthy one night and woke up without any blood! But I survived, and now I am as healthy as ever.

Q: How are the other Bombay newspapers taking the arrival of The Daily?

A: I can already claim two proud achievements First, reportage is improving: Bombay city is already getting much more space Second, for the first time people who have always resisted wage boards etc have been forced to give higher salaries in order to keep their staff. When *Blitz* started it stimulated other papers and magazines. We broke through We created a new kind of journalism. *Sunday* did it too, it created a new wave because people were tired of what they had been reading, particularly in the newspapers. In the *Daily* I am trying to combine the two—both the investigation and the news. ■

Communists failed in this country because they never tried to plant the roots of this foreign plant deep into Indian soil

How Dalmia interviewed Russy Karanjia

Russy Karanjia had been recommended to R. K. Dalmia, who then owned Bennet Coleman, as the next editor of the Times of India. *Karanjia had already started* Blitz. *He was called to Delhi and given an appointment for eight o'clock in the morning. Dapper as ever, Karanjia came in his sophisticated morning suit, and this is what he saw:*

"Dalmia was lying in a kind of boat, a tub made of wood and full of oil. He was lying inside the tub, absolutely naked and getting himself massaged. And I was there, all suited and booted for the Delhi winter. He said, 'You're a communist, aren't you?' So I said, 'I'm not one, but I support communism.' He said, 'If you come to Times of India, *you will have to shed all this.' And I said, 'What all this?' He replied, 'Your clothes, your ideas, your philosophy, everything.'*

"By that time the damn oil was staining my suit, so I drew backwards. He said, 'No, come here.' I said, 'Mr Dalmia, what gave you the idea...why are you offering me the job?' He said I had been recommended for the editorship. I replied that I had my own paper. He said, 'I'll buy your paper.' He had assessed its worth already at Rs 10 lakhs. So I said, 'Thanks a lot, but my paper is not for sale.'"

Jyoti Basu's time is nearly up

Power and Politics

By BARUN SENGUPTA

THERE seems to be little doubt now that the Left Front government of West Bengal will be sacked anytime between end-May and September. Mrs Gandhi and her ministers are, of course, all declaring from the house-tops that nothing undemocratic will be done to remove an elected state government, and some Left Front leaders are hoping that new developments in Assam or Gujarat will put Mrs Gandhi again in a tight corner and miraculously save their government. But big industrialists in Calcutta and independent political observers have little doubt that the end of Jyoti Basu's government is in sight.

Earlier, some people had thought that the sack would come towards the end of this year. They argued thus: The centre will not allow the Left Front government to supervise the Assembly elections due in early 1982 because no fair elections can be held with the CPI(M) in power. So the state government will be sacked anytime between September and December, provided Mrs Gandhi can bring the Assam situation under control. September has now become the outside limit because the Assam agitation appears to be dying out faster than expected. Also, Mrs Gandhi's hands are apparently being forced by the announcement to hold municipal elections in the state on 31 May. The Left Front government has sought to outmanoeuvre the centre with this. They hope to win all these elections and show the whole country how popular they are and thus make it difficult for the centre to dismiss them.

The biggest mistake of the CPI(M) leadership has always been to underestimate Mrs Gandhi. They did so in 1969 and had to pay a heavy price for it. They again underestimated her in 1980 and joined hands with many heterogeneous elements to topple the Morarji government. After Mrs Gandhi came back to power they thought that they could win her heart by good gestures. And now they are hoping they can outwit her by holding the municipal elections. They have yet to understand and assess her properly.

Whether this was also Mrs Gandhi's doing or not is quite immaterial, but the fact is that the Left Front is politically very isolated in West Bengal today. Other than a section of the CPI leadership, everyone is against the CPI(M) and the Left Front government. Although they have not formed any front or alliance against it yet, these sections are independently making the same charges against it. Be it the Marxist Socialist Unity Centre (SUC) or the Gandhian Congress(U), all are charging the Left Front government with unprincipled and partisan attempts to tamper with Bengal's cultural and educational heritage. Most of them are also saying that the police and the state administration are being used to solely further the CPI(M)'s interests. Some like the veteran Janata leader, Mr P. C. Sen, have openly said that with the Left Front government in power there cannot be any fair elections in the state.

These sections have all submitted memorandums to either the Prime Minister or the state governor. If Mr Y. B. Chavan now wants to oppose the dismissal of the Left Front government of West Bengal, Mrs Gandhi can promptly bring out the memorandum submitted to her by Mr P. R. Das Munshi, the West Bengal PCC(U) president, levelling all kinds of charges against Mr Jyoti Basu's government. If Janata president Chandra Shekhar comes forward to defend the government, Mrs Gandhi can again quote from Mr P. C. Sen's various statements in justification of the centre's action. In the next few weeks the non-Congress(I) opposition parties and prominent personalities of the state are expected to become more vocal in their criticism of the Left Front and bring forward more charges against it.

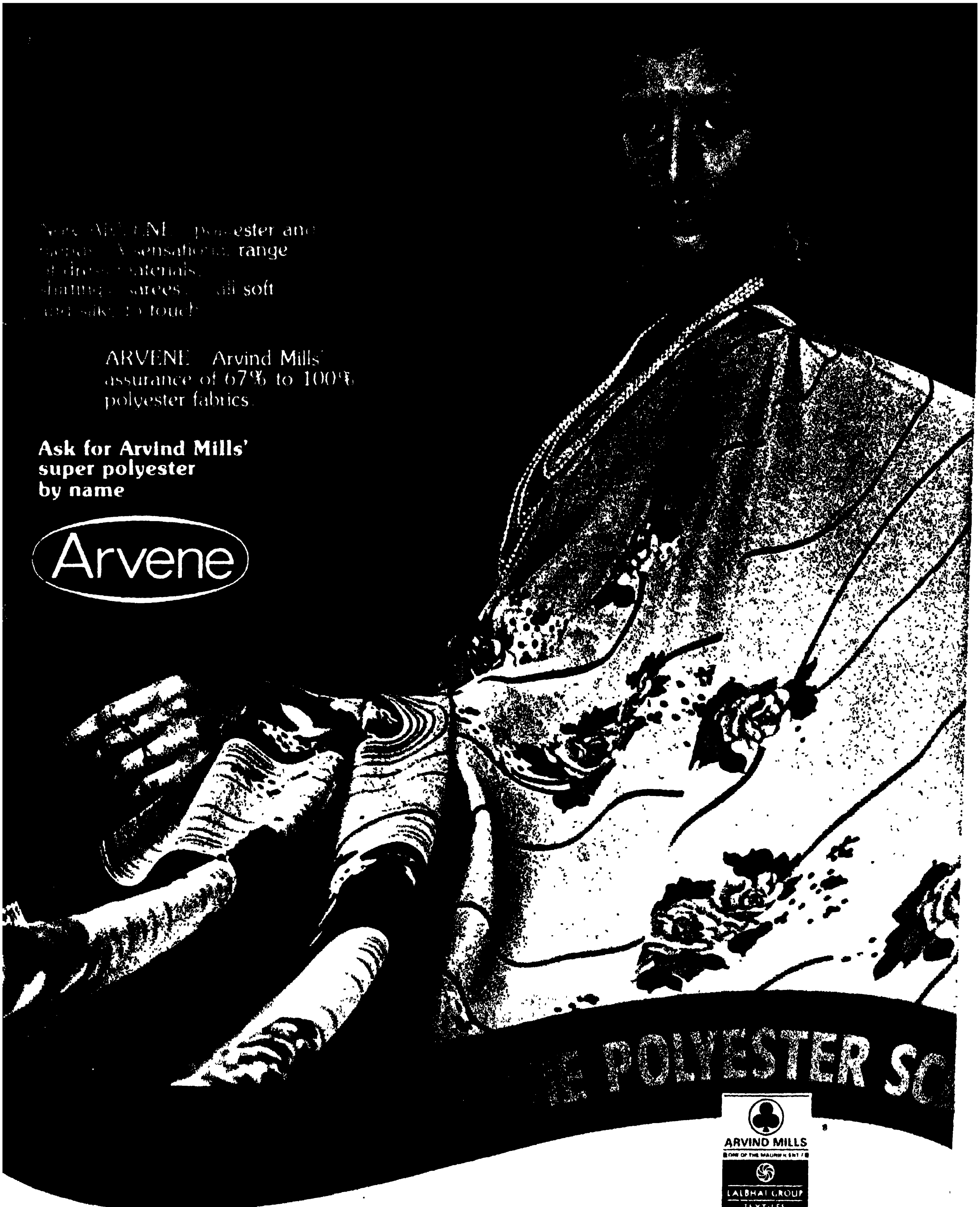
Some foolhardy Left Front leaders were banking heavily on the factionalism in the West Bengal Congress(I) to save them. It must be repeated that such people do not know Mrs Gandhi. She can stop this public bickering among West Bengal Congress(I) groups in a day if she really wants to. She just has to call the faction leaders and tell them sternly: Boys, no more fighting in public! And none of them will dare disobey her. Not that thereby she can achieve real unity among West Bengal Congress(I) leaders. But she can definitely achieve outward peace in the party anytime she likes.

So far as the chief ministership is concerned, she will never make her position clear before the Assembly elections are held. Mr Asoke Sen has of late become politically active, but his chances of becoming the next chief minister of West Bengal are remote. And though the Birlas and the Goenkas are still trying hard for Mr Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Mrs Gandhi cannot take another chance with him. She is not expected to instal in positions of power people who could make trouble for Rajiv Gandhi after her departure. Nor will she select either Mr Pranab Mukherjee or Mr A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury for the coveted West Bengal post. She needs men with Pranab Mukherjee's abilities beside her in Delhi. In all probability the next Congress(I) chief minister of West Bengal will be either Mr S. P. Mitra, the retired chief justice of the Calcutta High Court who was a member of Dr B. C. Roy's cabinet, or Dr Gopal Das Nag who is personally close to some top industrialists of Calcutta. But no name will be announced before the elections are over. Till then it will be Mrs Gandhi vs Mr Basu.

But, will it be possible for the Congress(I) to win the next West Bengal Assembly elections? Of course, yes. If they hold the elections within four to five months of the sacking of the Left Front government, it will not be difficult for the Congress(I) to win handsomely. Even in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections Congress(I) candidates secured about 74 lakh votes in West Bengal as against the Left Front's 94 lakhs. In West Bengal today victory will go to whoever conducts the elections. The only difference is that the CPI(M) manipulates election neatly and quietly and the Congress(I) does it openly and clumsily, as in 1972.

If this is so then why was the Congress defeated in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal? That was because of the misdeeds of the S. S. Ray ministry and the Emergency. A large number of even anti-CPI(M) people went against the government and the Congress. The government had antagonised the common man. It is impossible to rig elections or capture polling booths without the solid support of at least a section of the common people. The Congress(I) now has this support in abundance in rural West Bengal among the landed people. If they get police support these people will adopt every possible means to stop the CPI(M) from coming to power again. And then the CPI(M) will be able to test to what extent they have been able to make inroads into the state police force and how solid their new rural power base is.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the Congress(I) will win the next Assembly elections if they are held within four to five months of the dismissal of the Left Front government. And, I also have no hesitation in declaring that the urban middle class and poorer sections of the people of West Bengal will be worse off under a Congress(I) government.



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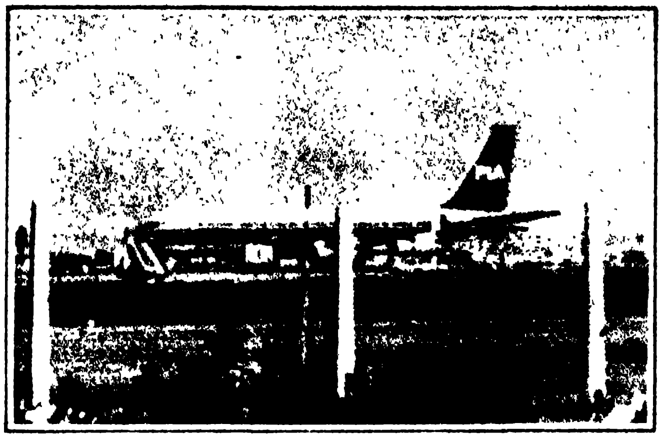
INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Hijack jolts Zia



When a PIA Boeing 720-B aircraft with 148 passengers and crew changed course and landed in Kabul on 2 March, there was proof positive of two things : Bhutto's ghost lives on in Pakistan and President Zia-ul Haq's position is very shaky.

ON 2 March a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Boeing 720-B en route to Peshawar from Karachi with 148 persons aboard suddenly changed course near Mianwali and landed on hostile territory, Kabul, at 4.57 pm IST. Nothing in the weather could have prompted this; how or why the plane landed at Kabul was not immediately known. Soon the Pakistan government's and PIA's worst suspicions were confirmed. A man calling himself Mohammad Alamgir and two others who claimed to be members of the little-known Alam-e-Zulfiqar (literally, "flag of Zulfiqar") had hijacked the plane. The men—all in their thirties—had with them pistols, light machine guns (LMGs), a large quantity of ammunition and something concealed in a plastic bag variously described as a "grenade-like device" and a "time-bomb " They spoke fluent English and Urdu.

As PIA officials established radio contact with the ill-fated aircraft, Alamgir was ready to listen to them, holding his pistol to the pilot's head. His first response to the panicky messages and appeals was uncertain: he threatened to blow up the plane if his "demands" (none of which were stated) were not met in 24 hours. For a long while Pakistani officials were kept guessing about how many accomplices Alamgir had. There had to be more than two of them to keep watch over the aircraft's 148 passengers and crew That was as far as the officials could get. As the plane stood menacingly on the Kabul airport runway, barely 700 yards from the terminal building, Soviet and Afghan troops encircled it from a safe distance. Among them was a ten-man Afghan anti-terrorist squad with Czech-made Scorpion submachineguns, gas masks and track suits under their military uniforms.

Meanwhile, frantic enquiries about the Alam-e-Zulfiqar movement were revealing: the organisation, described as the armed wing of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's banned Pakistan People's Party (PPP), was formerly called the Pakistan Liberation Army (PLA). It was supposedly set up by Bhutto's eldest son Murtaza (25), in London. Alamgir had declared his political goal to be the restoration of political liberties to Pakistan. Initially, Pakistani officials deliberately linked him with the PPP This only angered both the young man and PPP spokesmen. The hijacker demanded that the officials withdraw their charge—in exchange, he would free all women and children in the aircraft. Naturally, the authorities gave in. They promised to broadcast the retraction. The PPP spokesmen too reacted strongly—they denied that the hijack had taken place on their instructions, and went a step further: "The hijackers are mistaken if they think that they can help the opposition by hijacking the plane," they said

Maj Gen Rahim Khan, the Pakistan defence secretary and also head of the PIA was convinced from the start about who had masterminded the hijack: Murtaza Bhutto and the Argentinian-born internationally famous terrorist Carlos. He said Murtaza Bhutto had met Carlos only two weeks before the hijack in Libya. Besides, Murtaza himself had come to Kabul airport to speak to the hijackers. (Murtaza was being tried in absentia in a Pakistani court for anti-state activities in Afghanistan in 1980.) Khan alleged that the hijackers were actually following his orders. Alamgir, for his part, had confessed to being a wanted man.

Initially, the hijack seemed just another amateurish attempt to terrorise a government; later, as the days passed (till the time of going to press it had become the second longest hijack drama in history) the hijackers gave the impression of being stubborn, thorough and desperate; even quite clever.

A few hours after the plane arrived in Kabul, late in the night the airport staff took blankets and food aboard for the cold and hungry passengers. The aircraft was refuelled. Civil aviation authorities, after contacting the plane over radio, found that passengers were all safe and had been served meals.

Meanwhile, diplomatic problems began coming in the way of the Pakistan government's efforts to negotiate with the hijackers. A civil aviation official and a PIA executive arrived in Kabul on 2 March to join the Pakistani charged' affaires Rao Ali Bahadur for talks at the Afghan foreign ministry. The Afghans' stand was firm and clear: they would not allow the Pakistani team to establish radio contact with the plane because its safety was Afghanistan's responsibility.

Later the hijackers in a radio conversation stated their demands for the first time; they named 92 Pakistanis, including political prisoners who should be released from jail and flown to Kabul. Among them were some students and relatives of the three men, detained after recent political disturbances in Karachi. Nothing else happened on 3 March except that an Afghan doctor was allowed inside the aircraft to attend to a woman complaining of nausea from thick cigarette smoke.

On 4 March the hijackers asked the Kabul authorities to request permission to fly over Iranian territory. Later in the day a number of women and all the children on board were set free after the Pakistani retraction regarding Alamgir's political links came on the air. Sixteen women, ten children and two sick men were escorted from the plane to an airport hotel. Back in Pakistan confusion followed: a PIA plane which had been sent to pick up the women and children was refused landing permission by Kabul airport after it was airborne for 45 minutes.

On 5 March a Pakistani plane finally flew back to Peshawar with 28 women, children and sick men. A new detail had come to light by now. Two American women, Deborah Leighton Weisner and Charlotte Hubbel, had refused to get off without their male companions.

From the released hostages came of stories of all kinds: "They were threatening all the time, saying be quiet or we will blow up the plane with a time bomb," said a wide-eyed nine-year-old Zulfikar Shah. Bibi Khola, a mother of four was more charitable: "They never really harmed us. They gave me medicine."

March 6 was an eventful day. There was good news, and bad. The hijackers released a third sick man, Israf Shah. They also shot and killed one of the male hostages and dumped his body on the tarmac. The dead man, Tariq Rahim, ironically, happened to be an aide-de-camp of the former Pakistan PM, Z. A. Bhutto during his last days in power. He was also the son of Maj Gen Rahim Khan, the defence secretary. The reason for the killing was not clear (authorities speculated that it had probably resulted from a scuffle) because it occurred when officials were speaking to Alamgir over the radio. Seeing what had happened, Alamgir asked for a vehicle to carry Rahim's body away. An ambulance was rushed. The young man was still barely alive, writhing in pain on the tarmac. He was taken to hospital and declared dead.

General Zia insisted on treating the hijack as part of a feudal vendetta. He suggested an appropriately absurd solution: the three hijackers' relatives be handed over to the relatives of the hostages. But Zia knew too well what the hijack meant—political pressure on him was mounting. He announced a cabinet reshuffle, the result of which was an almost all-civilian government; only three army officers remained in the cabinet.

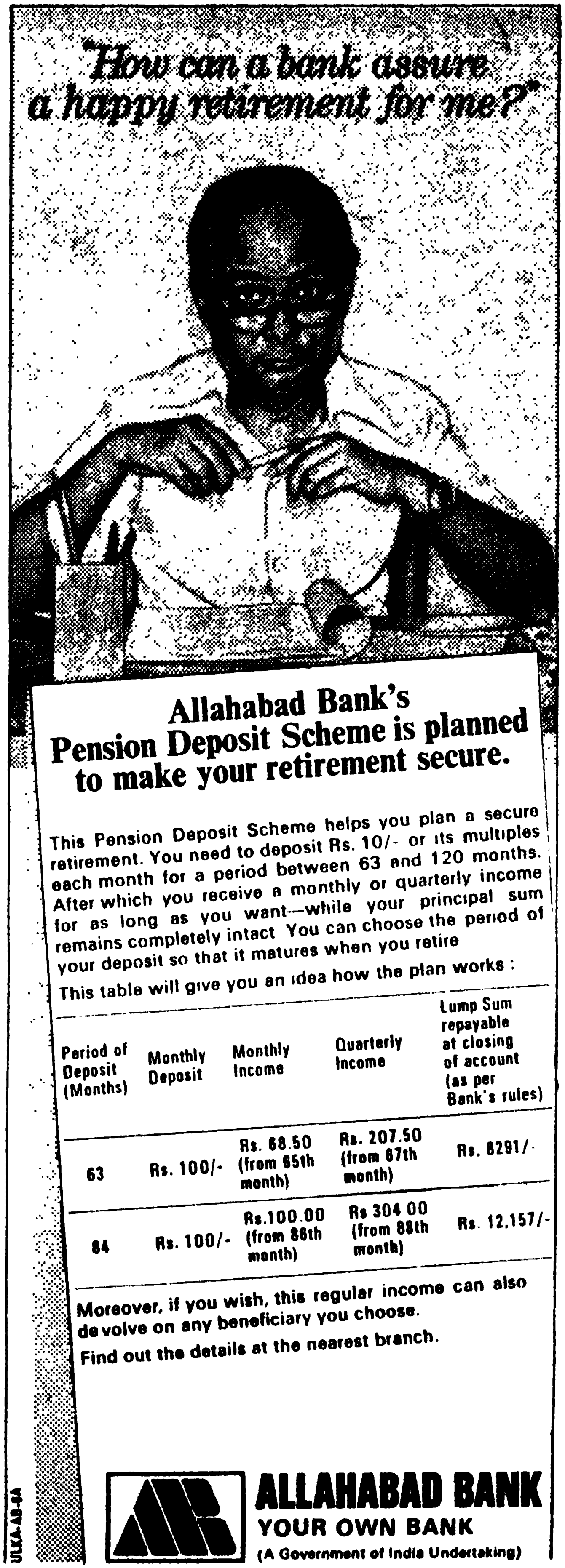
On 7 March, Maj Gen Rahim Khan said Pakistan could release only five of the political prisoners named by the hijackers. The others could not be freed because there are criminal charges against them, he said. The statement came after a four pm deadline had expired without incident. Two more sick men, both Pakistani nationals, and two American women were released. This left the total number of captives at 111, including three Americans, one Nigerian and one World Bank employee of unknown nationality. Back in Islamabad, Gen Zia seemed still unworried: "There is no need to get unduly worried...such incidents take place in this world." Then, in defence, "Some people believe in agitation politics. They think public property is enemy property. I have always believed in politics of understanding." As if to prove his words, on 8 March the Pakistan government cracked down on the opposition. Begum Nusrat Bhutto, her daughter Benazir, along with 50 other PPP members and supporters were rounded up and thrown into Karachi district jail.

At the other end, the bargaining for human beings continued. Pakistan offered to release 20 political prisoners now in exchange for 100 hostages. But the hijackers were firm. They threatened to kill their captives one at a time if their demands were not met by 3 pm IST on 8 March. When 8 March came, the hijackers had decided their next step. They rejected the Pakistan government's offer; negotiations broke down. The Boeing 720 offloaded some cargo that night before leaving for Damascus.It was only at midday the next day that Pakistan officials got the news.

On the way to Damascus, the pilot of the ill-fated aircraft managed to radio a passing plane about the new development. The sky over the Syrian capital was dark and cloudy. It had rained hard the previous night. The plane touched down on the runway at about 4.45 am IST on 9 March, and taxied to a remote end of the airport.

On 10 March, the hijackers again extended the deadline for meeting their demands till 3.30 pm IST on 11 March, and repeated their threats. According to Syrian authorities, they scaled down their previous demand for 92 political prisoners to 55. The deadline expired, and yet again, was extended to 9.39 pm IST on 12 March. The Pakistani envoy to Jordan, Mr Shahryar Khan, who joined his Syrian counterpart to negotiate with the hijackers, said there was a "stalemate" at this point. "We will under no conditions release hardened criminals," Mr Khan said. The hijackers decided to return the compliment; they reverted to their earlier demand for 92 prisoners.

The latest on the subject was that the prisoners were on their way to Damascus and then Tripoli. How the drama ends is immaterial; it has already succeeded on two counts—in bringing Pakistan's internal situation to the world's notice, and unnerving a desperate administration. As Begum Nusrat Bhutto said over the telephone, "It (the hijack) demonstrates that many people are desperate for change." ■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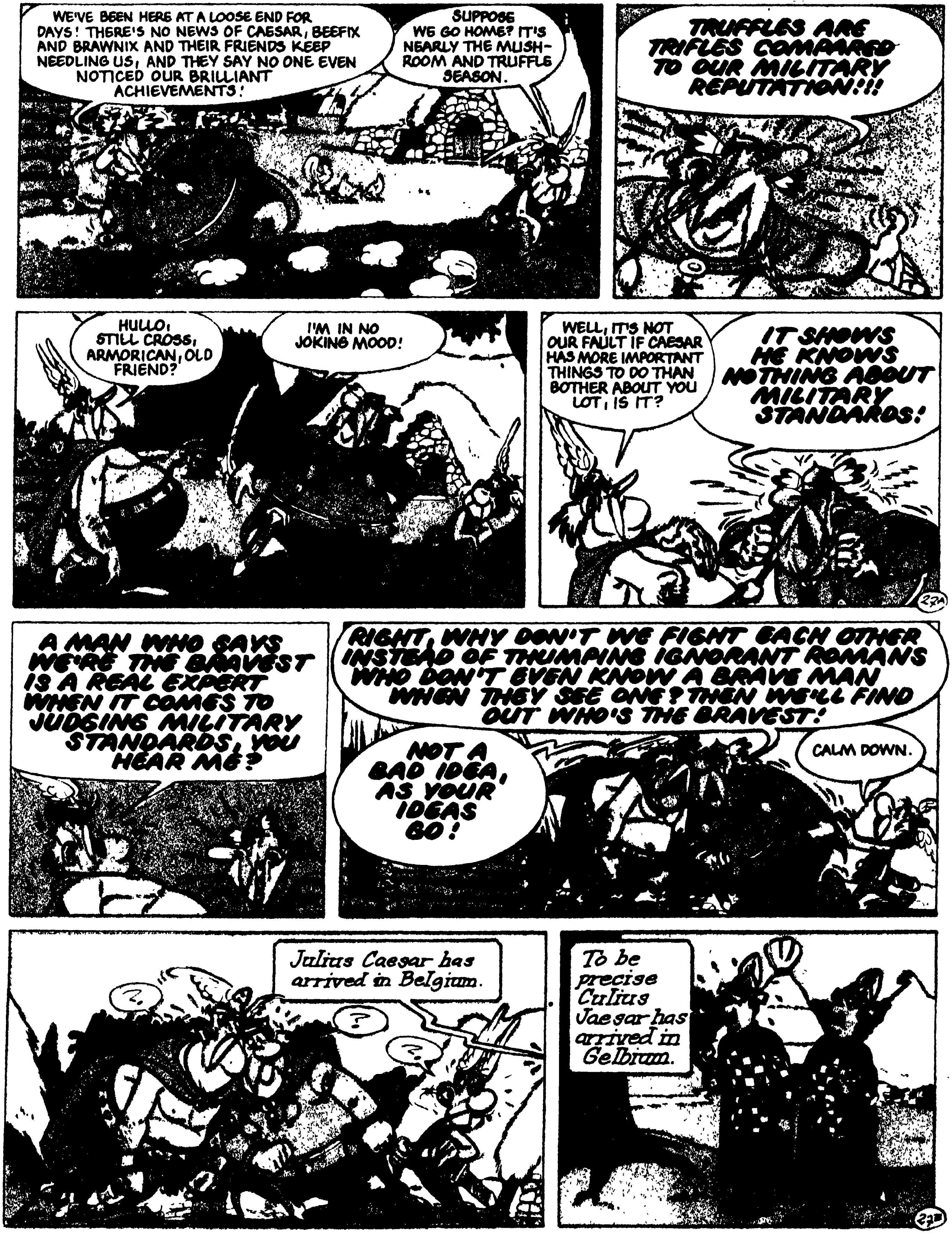
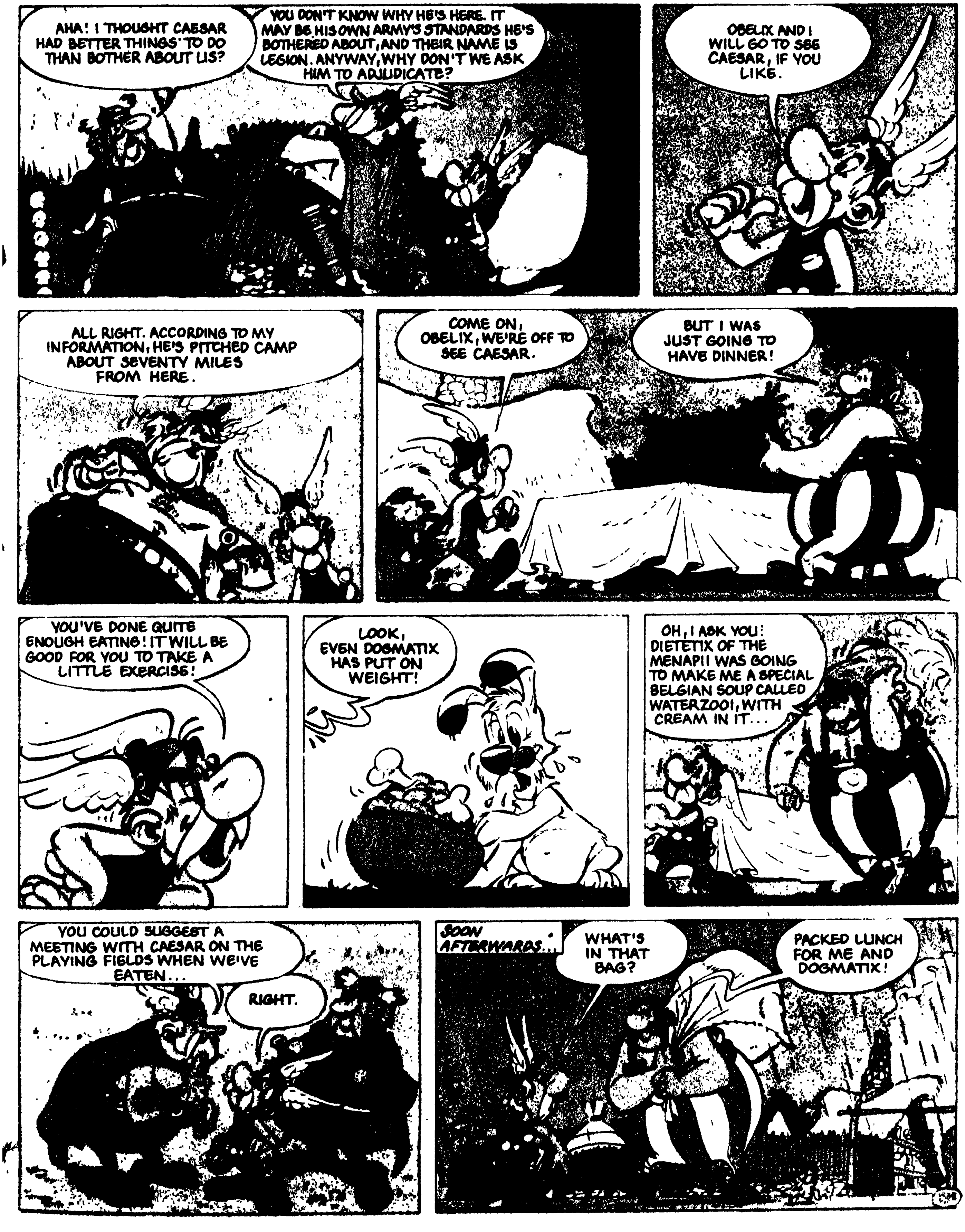

WE'VE BEEN HERE AT A LOOSE END FOR DAYS! THERE'S NO NEWS OF CAESAR, BEEFIX AND BRAWNIX AND THEIR FRIENDS KEEP NEEDLING US, AND THEY SAY NO ONE EVEN NOTICED OUR BRILLIANT ACHIEVEMENTS!
SUPPOSE WE GO HOME? IT'S NEARLY THE MUSHROOM AND TRUFFLE SEASON.
TRUFFLES ARE TRIFLES COMPARED TO OUR MILITARY REPUTATION!!!
HULLO, STILL CROSS, ARMORICAN, OLD FRIEND?
I'M IN NO JOKING MOOD!
WELL, IT'S NOT OUR FAULT IF CAESAR HAS MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO THAN BOTHER ABOUT YOU LOT, IS IT?
IT SHOWS HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT MILITARY STANDARDS!
A MAN WHO SAYS WE'RE THE BRAVEST IS A REAL EXPERT WHEN IT COMES TO JUDGING MILITARY STANDARDS, YOU HEAR ME?
RIGHT, WHY DON'T WE FIGHT EACH OTHER INSTEAD OF THUMPING IGNORANT ROMANS WHO DON'T EVEN KNOW A BRAVE MAN WHEN THEY SEE ONE? THEN WE'LL FIND OUT WHO'S THE BRAVEST!
NOT A BAD IDEA, AS YOUR IDEAS GO!
CALM DOWN.
Julius Caesar has arrived in Belgium.
?
?
?
To be precise Culius Jaesar has arrived in Gelbium.


AHA! I THOUGHT CAESAR HAD BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN BOTHER ABOUT US?
YOU DON'T KNOW WHY HE'S HERE. IT MAY BE HIS OWN ARMY'S STANDARDS HE'S BOTHERED ABOUT, AND THEIR NAME IS LEGION. ANYWAY, WHY DON'T WE ASK HIM TO ADJUDICATE?
OBELIX AND I WILL GO TO SEE CAESAR, IF YOU LIKE.
ALL RIGHT. ACCORDING TO MY INFORMATION, HE'S PITCHED CAMP ABOUT SEVENTY MILES FROM HERE.
COME ON, OBELIX, WE'RE OFF TO SEE CAESAR.
BUT I WAS JUST GOING TO HAVE DINNER!
YOU'VE DONE QUITE ENOUGH EATING! IT WILL BE GOOD FOR YOU TO TAKE A LITTLE EXERCISE!
LOOK, EVEN DOGMATIX HAS PUT ON WEIGHT!
OH, I ASK YOU: DIETETIX OF THE MENAPII WAS GOING TO MAKE ME A SPECIAL BELGIAN SOUP CALLED WATERZOOI, WITH CREAM IN IT...
YOU COULD SUGGEST A MEETING WITH CAESAR ON THE PLAYING FIELDS WHEN WE'VE EATEN...
RIGHT.
SOON AFTERWARDS...
WHAT'S IN THAT BAG?
PACKED LUNCH FOR ME AND DOGMATIX!

"Destroy Libya!"

That was the Israeli gut reaction when they found that a nuclear bomb was ticking away under New York, waiting to go off if Isreal did not give up all occupied Arab territories in a day. Meanwhile, a terrified White House began counting how many might perish if the bomb went off: a colossal 6.74 million! In this instalment from *The Fifth Horseman* authors Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre (who wrote *Freedom at Midnight*) continue their imaginary story based on Arab-Israeli tensions. The book has been brought out in India by Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd and is priced at Rs 60.

THE only sound reaching Muammar Kadhafi's ears was the low and mournful sigh of a distant wind. No tele-printer's hum, no radio's crackle, no jangling telephone marred the perfect quiet of his desert.

As was only natural, he had chosen to pass the critical hours preceding the test of his Hydrogen Bomb in the solitude of the spaces in which he'd found his faith and nurtured his dreams.

There were no television screens here parading the world before his eyes, no smartly uniformed aides laying out the options available to him, no blinking panels of light to remind him of the strength of his massed armies.

Kadhafi was alone with the oneness of the desert and the stillness of his soul. He was a son of the desert. He had entered the world in a goat-skin tent similar to the one in which he had just passed the night. His birth had been heralded by the rumble of the artillery duel fought that evening between the gunners of Rommel's Afrika Korps and Montgomery's Eighth Army.

He had spent his boyhood wandering the desert with his tribe, maturing to the searing gusts of the siroccos, the blessings of the winter rains, the quick flowering of the pastures. From the sand seas below Cyrenaica south-west to the palm trees of Fezzan, there was not a prickly bush, a sweep of grass or a dried-out river bed that had escaped his predator's gaze in the nomad's quest for pasturage for his flock.

Regularly, when he felt overwhelmed by the frustrations and disappointments of the power that was now his, he retreated back here to his desert to immerse himself again in the well-spring of his being.

It was here, to this encampment, that one year before, Whalid Dajani had delivered the documents that had made his desert experiment possible. They were a set of computer print-outs stolen from the body of a murdered French scientist, a seemingly meaningless stream of numbers and interrelationships.

They chartered the course of an experiment that had fevered scientists' imaginations since the English astro-physicists at the Cavendish Laboratories in the 30's had first dreamed of harnessing the unaccountable energy release of the sun and the stars to Man's needs.

The goal they sought was called fusion, a process which would, when it was finally realised, mean that water would become a source of energy to light the lamps of Mankind and end Man's energy problem for as long as his planet would endure. In the US, the USSR, the UK, France, Italy and Japan men had pursued that dream for two decades.

The stolen French papers involved an effort to use the power of the laser beam in the experiment, to force the explosion of a bubble of liquid the size of a pinhead. The figures they contained represented the dark underside of the dream of fusion, a kind of Faustian compact the researchers pursuing it had to strike with the capricious gods of science.

For, frozen into the endless rows of figures on the computer print-out charting the bubble's explosion was the secret of the hydrogen bomb Harold Agnew had explained to the NSC conference, in Washington.

Immersed now in the reassuring familiarity of his desert, Kadhafi awaited the results of his test in perfect calm. If it had worked, it was now, he reasoned, in their first flash of anger, that the Americans would lash out against him.

If that was God's will, then he was ready to perish here in the surroundings that had formed him. If it had failed, he would have one course open: he would condemn the "plot" fomented within his borders, arrest a few Palestinians and stage a mock trial to mollify the anger of the Americans and the world.

His alert ears picked up the flutter of a helicopter coming to announce the result, to return him to his capital in triumph or shame. With the stoicism and self-discipline that had been the guarantors of his forbears' survival, he watched unmoved as it drew up, then fluttered to rest 50 yards from his tent. A man leapt out. "Ya sidi!" he shouted. "It worked!"

Kadhafi unrolled a worn prayer rug on the sands before him. His first reaction to the news was to bow his head in prayer, a prayer of awe and gratitude for the power that now rested in his hands.

Rising, he turned to the pilot. "At last," he said, "I shall no longer have to endure the shame of being an Arab president who stands by while my Palestinian brothers are stripped of the last shreds of their homeland." Then he boarded the helicopter to begin the most colossal blackmail attempt of all time.

THE President of the United States sat motionless at the conference table in the National Military Command Centre, every fibre of his being concentrated on the dilemma before him.

"The first thing I would like to say," he announced, finally breaking the silence that had followed Kadhafi's successful test, "is that we must not give in to this threat. We will destroy the basis of international order if we do. All our actions must now be based on the assumption that he has somehow managed to hide a Hydrogen bomb in New York."

The President continued: "And we have also got to assume that Kadhafi is deadly serious when he threatens to detonate it if any word of it gets to the public."

In a strange way, the President thought, he may have done us a service. If word of this ever got out, we'd probably have an outburst of public opinion that would close down every option we have except forcing the Israelis out of the West Bank.

"Mr President!" The words, in a hoarse, exasperated bark, came from Delbert Crandell, the Secretary of Energy. "Why are we sitting here talking? Lather those bastards from one end of Libya to the other. That's all. Wipe them out. Lay the Trident missiles on the subs we have on patrol in the Med. on them. That'll turn the damn place into a sea of glass in 30 seconds. There won't be a goat left alive over there."

Crandell sank back, satisfied. His words had a cathartic effect on the room. It was as though the outspoken Energy Secretary had given voice to a thought all had had but no one else had been prepared to express, the brutal, but reassuring affirmation that, in the final analysis, the United States possessed the power to squash a menace such as this.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANUP RAY

"Mr Christopher." The President's tone was soft, sad almost as he addressed the Deputy Secretary of State. "What is the population of Libya?"

"Two million, Sir, give or take a hundred thousand. Census figures over there aren't very reliable."

The President turned down the table towards the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. "Harry, how many people would we lose if a three megaton device went off in New York? Without evacuation?"

"Sir, it would be difficult to give you an accurate figure on that without looking at some numbers."

"I realize that but give me your best estimate."

The Chairmans reflected a movement. "Between four and five million, Sir."

There was dead silence as the awful mathematics of the Chairman's figures registered on everyone in the room. The giants of the world. The United States and the USSR held each other in strategic checkmate because they shared a parity of horror, an equilibrium once described with almost too perfect irony by the acronym for the philosophy on which the US's thermonuclear strategy had been based —MAD—for "Mutual Assured Destruction." I kill you, you kill me. It was the old Russian comedy, everybody dies.

But this, if it were true, was the terrible alteration in the rules of the game that had haunted responsible world leaders for years, the end game in the struggle against nuclear proliferation for which the President had fought so hard—and with so little success.

He turned abruptly to the Admiral commanding the Centre and ordered an appraisal of the military situation and the options open to the U. S. Armed Forces.

Harold Brown, the Secretary of Defence, intervened.

"Mr President, I would suggest our first action should be to alert the Soviets to what has happened. However strained our relations are, I think that in this we can count on their help in bringing Kadhafi to ground. Furthermore, they should be made aware that any military moves we make are not being directed against them."

The President agreed. "Open up the Red Line," he commanded his National Security Assistant, Jack Eastman, "and inform the Soviets I'd like to speak with the Chairman."

"Sir," Warren Christopher, the Deputy Secretary of State said, "I think it's also essential we co-ordinate any actions we take with our Allies and keep them imformed of this at the highest level.

"I'd like authorisation to get off

It's a steal!

"I tell you it's been stolen!" [illegible] MacDuff, two pin-points of [illegible] appearing high on his cheeks. "What do you mean am I sure? Of course I'm sure! Sure as I've got a hundred and [illegible] three pounds and [illegible] pence in my wallet right now. And I don't [illegible] you airport blokes on this. Get me Scotland Yard."

* * *

The inspector at Scotland Yard [illegible] politely. "If I may re-create the events leading up to the 'crime' sir. You arrived at the airport well in advance, before the departure time of your flight. You had at that time, five pieces of luggage: three suitcases, one 'carry-on' as you call it, and a bagpipe case ..."

"And it was my VIP suitcase that was missing!" boomed MacDuff. "One moment it was there ... and the next ..." MacDuff took out his hip-flask, the one with the built-in dropper and carefully measured out a tot. "Get me an artist. I shall describe my VIP suitcase in every little detail ..."

"... That will help, sir."

* * *

[illegible]

"Your [illegible]

"Never say die laddie. Remember, if nothing else, it will cost a few breaths."

"Och, it's one of my VIP suitcases, you young whippersnapper! And very good they make them too. Been all over the world with them ... I tell you, I'm getting my money's worth. And that's why I've got to have my suitcase back!" exploded MacDuff.

MacDuff was pacified by the inspector, who convinced him to relax and go back to his country house. "You'll have to sign some papers before leaving. A formality, sir. And I [illegible] very best."

Back at home, MacDuff [illegible] qui vive. He just [illegible] He couldn't [illegible] cost a few breaths. [illegible] and in [illegible] unannounced.

"I think we have found your suitcase, sir. Is this it?"

An officer followed, wheeling ... [illegible] was it! MacDuff would know it anywhere.

"But how did you find it so soon?" said MacDuff, pouncing on it. "And did you catch the thief?"

The inspector inspected the tips of his patent leather shoes. "There was no thief, sir. Certain things led me to believe you are, well, preoccupied, shall we say, and the fact is, sir, that you had never taken your VIP suitcase to the airport. I have taken the liberty of breaking in and rummaging through your house, sir. Your suitcase was in the luggage room."

"But ... but how ...?"

"When you signed the papers, sir, at the Yard, you forgot to put the cap back on your pen. The ink stained your shirt, sir. So I knew you were" cough cough ... "forgetful."

"My laundry bill!" moaned MacDuff.

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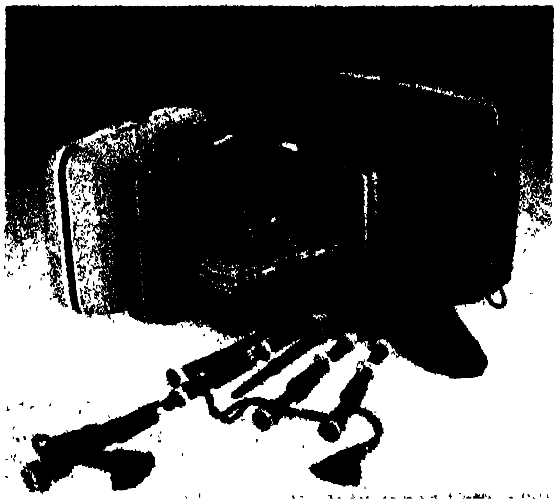
MacDuff in a more relaxed mood, photographed at the grounds surrounding his country home.



'Eyes only' messages to Mrs Thatcher, Helmut Schmidt and, above all, President Giscard. We've got to assume the source of Kadhafi's plutonium for the atomic trigger of that hydrogen bomb was his French reactor. The French may be able to turn up information for us on the people Kadhafi's involved in this that will help the F. B. I. run them down."

The President gave his approval, then ordered the Admiral to resume his briefing. This time a series of bright red lights on the semi-darkened screen indicated the position of every ship of the sixth Fleet, most of them gathered off Crete on an antisubmarine warfare exercise.

Harry Fuller, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, broke in. "Mr President, I think there's one point that needs to be clarified right away. There is no viable military solution to this crisis. Sure, we can destroy Libya. Instantly. But that's not going to give us any guarantee whatsoever that his bomb—if it's in New York—won't explode. And that, in my judgment, precludes our taking any military action against Kadhafi for the time being."

"I'm afraid I have to agree with that," the President noted grimly glancing down the table to Crandell. "What do you recommend we do then?"

"Every move we make," the Admiral declared in a voice that boomed through the room like a Navy klaxon sounding General Quarters, "had got to be designed to remind Kadhafi of the potential consequences of his action. He's got to be kept aware every hour, every minute, every second of this damn crisis that we can thermonuclearise him in the blink of an eye. Let him live, eat and breathe that and see how he likes it."

The Admiral waved a hand at the red lights flashing on the screen. "Send the Sixth Fleet hell for leather for the Libyan coast. Once they get there, I'd put them right up against his coastline where his radar's sure to pick them up.

"Run a high altitude aerial screen up and down the coastline from the carriers and tell the pilots to talk in the clear so he's constantly reminded they're carrying enough missiles to turn that Goddam country of his into instant ruin."

A dour smile appeared on the Admiral's face. "The deployment of force in a situation like this is designed to alter your enemy's perception of his actions. Maybe this will alter his."

"Mr President," there it was again, that rasping drawl of Crandell's. "You're not going to like what I'm going to say but I'm going to say it anyway. Destroy Kadhafi. Right now."

The Chief Executive gave his Energy Secretary a look of ill-concealed exasperation. It did nothing to staunch the flow of his unsolicited advice.

"The great mistake we made in Iran was not acting the very first day they took those hostages. The whole world would have understood us if we had.. We waited and what happened? Everybody was holding us by the coattails. 'Don't do anything rash. Think about our oil. Think about the Russians'."

> "At last, I shall no longer have to endure the shame of being an Arab president who stands by, while my Palestinian brothers are stripped of the last shred of their homeland."

"Mr Crandell, we're not talking about 50 hostages in an embassy." The President almost spat the words at his Energy Secretary. Despite the placid surface he turned to the public. He was in private, a man of considerable temper, capable, when angered, of lacerating meanness. "We're talking about five million people and New York City."

"We're talking about this country, Mr President, and a man who's declared war on us. We've got to show him and everybody else on this globe that there's a limit beyond which we aren't going to be pushed. Mark my words, if you don't respond to this man, challenge right now, tell him he's got five minutes to tell you where that bomb's hidden or he and his country are dead," Crandell was waving a pudgy finger across the table, "then before this night is over you'll be ready to betray this nation's friends to satisfy a blackmatter."

"Crandell," the President had paled under his efforts to rein in his temper, "when I want military advice from you I'll call for it. I'm not going to put the lives of five million of our people at risk until I've exhausted every possible avenue of saving them and this world from an unspeakable catastrophe."

"By talking Mr President and once you've started talking you'll start compromising."

At the far end of the table, Bennington had just picked up his telephone. The CIA chief listened for a moment. "Excuse me, Sir," he said to the President, "but it looks like we've got another problem on our hands. Mossad's just got onto the agency. The Israelis picked up the explosion on their seismographs. They're very suspicious that it was a nuclear shot and want to know what we've got on it."

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"Christ!" someone groaned from the end of the table. "If they find out what Kadhafi's done, they'll take him out on their own and we may lose New York."

The President frowned. There was probably no political leader in the world he disliked quite so much Menachem Begin. Dealing with Begin had forced him to draw on reserves of patience which he'd never imagined he'd possessed. Still, Begin was a vital element in the dreadful equation before him.

"Get Mr Begin on the phone," he snapped.

THE chimes of St. John's Monastery of the Cross were tolling half past nine, Jerusalem time, when Menachem Begin's black Dodge slipped below the Knesset, Israel's Parliament, and up to the unattractive, functional building that housed the centre of the nation's government.

Begin nodded courteously to the elderly Arab peasants in black robes and white kaffiyehs waiting to enter the building's basement where the archives of a long-vanished Palestine, the Palestine of the Ottoman Turks in which most of them had been born, were stored.

A few minutes later, he took his place at the centre of the oval table at which his Cabinet was gathered in emergency session. None of the men at the table had even the faintest intimation of the nature of the emergency that had brought them there. Begin had confided in no one. For a moment his regard swept the room, his dark eyes rendered outsized by the glasses he wore to correct his astigmatic vision. Carefully choosing his words, he began.

"Gentlemen, we are facing the gravest crisis in our history." With the phenomenal memory for which he was noted, he recollected every detail of his conversation with the President.

Nothing Begin could have told his Ministers, no revelation he might have made could have horrified them more than his words. For 15 years their nation's survival had reposed on two strategic pillars, the support of the United States and the knowledge that in the ultimate crisis, Israel alone in the Middle East possessed atomic weapons. Now, the image of a mushroom cloud rising above the Libyan desert had destroyed the strategic basis of their state.

"We have no choice!"

The words thundered through the stricken silence left by Begin's speech, their impact underscored by the sound of a heavy fist smashing on to the Ministerial table. They came from a barrel-chested man in an old sweater

"(If Kadhafi manages to detonate the bomb) that would be a tragedy. An appalling, ghastly tragedy. But it's a risk we're forced to take. What would be a greater tragedy—the destruction of New York or the destruction of our (Israeli) nation?"

and open shirt, his suntanned face setting off a full head of pure white hairs.

"We can't live with a madman pointing a thermo-nuclear gut at our heads."

Benny Ranan was one of the five authentic military heroes in the room, a former paratrooper general who'd jumped at the head of his troops in the 1973 war. He rose and strode around the table with the swaying gait his paratroopers loved to mimic.

His destination was the mural covering one wall of the room, a photograph of the Middle East taken by Walter Schirra from his Apollo 7 spaceship. Ranan gazed at it dramatically.

"What this does is change totally the conditions of our existence. All Kadhafi has to do to destroy us is drop a bomb here..."

Ranan's thick forefinger thumped the map in the vicinity of Tel Aviv "and here—and here. Three bombs and this nation will cease to exist."

He turned back to his fellow ministers. The booming parade-ground voice dropped in register to a hoarse whisper. "What would our life be worth here knowing that at any second, any minute, any hour, a fanatic who's been screaming for our blood for years can incinerate us instantly? I couldn't live like that. Could any of you? Could anybody?"

He paused, aware of the impact his words were having on the men in the room. "We have to destroy him, gentlemen. Right now. Before the sun is high."

Ranan placed his forearms on the table so that his heavy trunk leaned forward and the lingering smell of the garlic and cheese of his breakfast hung on the air. "And we will tell the Americans what we intend to do once we've done it."

Again, quiet muffled the room. The Deputy Prime Minister thoughtfully lit his pipe. Yigal Yadin's bushy moustache, his bald head were as much a part of Israel's political scene as Ranan's bulky figure. He was an archaeologist, a humanistic warrior who was the architect of Israel's victory in the first war with her Arab neighbours in 1948.

"For the moment, Benny," he noted, "the people who are menaced by Kadhafi's bomb are not here. They're in New York."

"That doesn't matter. What matters is destroying Kadhafi before he can react. The Americans will thank us for doing it."

"And suppose Kadhafi still manages to detonate that bomb and destroy New York? How much gratitude do you suppose that will inspire in the Americans?"

Ranan sighed. "That would be a tragedy. An appalling, ghastly tragedy. But it's a risk we're forced to take. What would be a greater tragedy—the destruction of New York or the destruction of our nation?"

"For whom, Benny? Yadin asked. "Us or the Americans?"

Benny" the Prime Minister noted, "I must remind you the Americans have asked us to avoid taking any unilateral action against Kadhafi."

"The Americans?" Ranan gave a growing, scornful laugh. "Let me tell you something, the Americans are going to sell us out. That's what they're going to do." His hand waved towards a bank of black telephones in one corner of the room. "They're on the phone trying to talk to Kadhafi right now. Dealing away our land, our people, behind our backs."

"And suppose we do negotiate over those settlements?"

Those words from the mouth of General Avidar stunned the room. At the head of his tank battalion in 1967 he had defeated the Arab Legion in the crucial battle for the West Bank. "Giving them up won't mean the end of Israel. Most of the people in this country didn't want them there in the first place."

"What at stake is not those settlements," Ranan's answering voice was deep and controlled. "Or New York. It's whether this nation can exist beside a Muammar Kadhafi armed with thermonuclear weapons. I say it cannot. We have to act right now, before the world can organise to stop us.

"If we wait we'll have no West Bank, no Jerusalem, Yassir Arafat and his thugs on our doorstep, our hands tied behind our backs by the Americans and Kadhafi poised to slaughter us. We will have no more will or reason to exist "

Menachem Begin had followed the argument without intervening, anxious to let every opinion enter into the debate. Now, softly, he spoke to his Defence Minister. "Does this nation have any military option to stop Kadhafi other than an all-out, pre-emptive nuclear attack on Libya?"

The burly ex-fighter pilot who was the architect of Israel's Air Force slowly despairingly almost, moved his head from side to side. "I can see none. We have no resources to mount and sustain an attack across hundreds of miles of open water."

Begin glanced at his hands, folded on the table before him. "I have lived through one holocaust. I cannot live under the threat of another. I believe we have no choice. I pray God, the bomb in New York doesn't explode."

"Good God!" General Avidar gasped. "We won't have a friend left in the world."

Begin's face was set in a tragic, melancholy mask. "We have no friends now. We never have. From Pharaoh to Hilter we have been a people condemned by God and history to dwell alone."

He called for a vote. Scanning the raised hands, he remembered the May afternoon in 1948 when the leaders of the Jewish people had decided to proclaim their state—by just one vote. That was the margin before him—one vote. He turned to General Dorit. "Destroy Libya," he ordered.

No people in the world are better trained or better equipped to move fast in a crisis than the Israelis. Speed of reaction is a life or death reflex in a nation whose principal city can count on only two minutes' warning of an enemy attack from its northern borders, five minutes from the south.

Twenty minutes after Begin had given his order, his generals had planned the first pre-emptive nuclear attack in history. Its code name was "Operation Maspha" for the Biblical site where the thunder of Yahweh had routed the Philistines.

MENACHEM BEGIN removed his steel-rimmed glasses. He lowered his head into the cradle of his left hand, slowly massaging his bushy eyebrows with his thumb and middle finger. There was a world of agony in that simple gesture, the reflection of a weariness so crushing that Israel's Prime Minister felt numb.

How had they found out, he wondered. Since 1973, every detail of Israel's nuclear strategy had been reviewed, pondered again and again, to be sure that no revealing detail of a coming attack could be picked up by a passing satellite, that no compromising communication could be intercepted by electronic surveillance. Yet, two minutes ago, he had received a phone call from the French Ambassador. His voice hesitant with concern, the Frenchman had relayed the threat from the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; if Israel went through with her nuclear strike against Libya, Soviet rockets would instantly annihilate their nation.

Were the Soviets bluffing? Were they just rattling their rockets the way Krushchev had done at Suez? Did he have the right to risk the nation's existence on the possibility they were?

He got up and walked to the window. Pale and trembling, the "Polish gentleman," as he was often described, studied the ageless sweep of the Judean hills, the monuments of modern Israel, the Knesset, the Hebrew University, the Israel Museum

"God forbid, Sir, if there is an onshore wind blowing when this thing explodes to drive the fall-out up into New York State and New England, it'll contaminate a swathe of land thousands of miles square. Right up into Vermont. Nobody will be able to live there for generations to come."

sparkling in the sunshine.

On a rise just beyond his line of vision was the one which meant more to Begin than any of the others, the white marble canopy of a "Tent of Remembrance" under which burned an eternal flame in memory of the six million victims of the holocaust—and most of his own family.

Begin had sworn on the altar of those six million dead that never again would his people live another holocaust. Would they if he went through with this? The Soviet threat was so devastatingly simple and direct. Yet Ranan was right. How could Israel exist constantly menaced with destruction at Kadhafi's hands?

Everything had depended on speed, on annihilating Libya and explaining why afterwards. In the terrible chess game of global terror, there was only one move left that could check the Russians now and it was the Americans who had to play it. Their counterthreat might stay the Russians' hand.

But, Begin asked himself, were the Americans going to risk that when they discovered he'd acted on his own, that he had not hesitated to imperil the city of New York to save his nation?

In a flash, Begin understood. The Russian hadn't found out. No one had. The Americans hadn't trusted them, so they had turned to the Soviets.

"LET'S get going." David Hannon, a Pentagon expert on the effects of thermonuclear weapons recognised the familiar face of the President's NSC adviser, Jack Eastman. He self-consciously touched his wavy, white hair to make sure it was in place and gave a nervous tug of his striped tie.

"Sir, in New York with a three megaton thermonuclear explosion we've got a situation that is unique in the world. All those tall buildings. The thrust of our studies has always been what we can do to the Soviets, not what they can do to us. And since they don't have any tall buildings, this is a circumstance where the data run out, so to speak."

Little dew balls of sweat began to gleam on Hannon's head. "The fact of the matter is we just can't say with total precision what this weapon is going to do to Manhattan. The damage would be so great. It's almost inconceivable."

Hannon rose and walked to a map of the New York area. A series of concentric circles, blue, red, green and black moved out from the narrow pencil of Manhattan Island at its centre.

"What we've done is work out here our best estimate of the destruction this would cause, based on our computer calculations. Since we don't know exactly where this device is, we've assumed for the purpose of our study that it's here." His finger indicated Time's Square. "In that case, the blue circle represents Zone 'A' from Ground Zero out to three miles."

He moved his finger along its circumference down Lower Manhattan in the South, through Green Point in Brooklyn, across Upper Manhattan at 96th Street and, west of the Hudson, around Union City, Hoboken and parts of Jersy City. "Nothing inside this circle is going to survive on any recognisable form."

"Nothing?" the President asked, incredulous. "Nothing at all?"

"Nothing, Sir.The devastation will be total.

"With the winds this is going to produce, you're going to have skyscrapers literally flying all over the landscape. Disintegrating in seconds. They'll blow away like Long Island beach huts in a hurricane."

Hannon turned to his audience again. He was so controlled and composed he might have been addressing a class at the War College. "If this really goes off, gentlemen, all that will be left of Manhattan Island as we know it today is a smouldering pile of debris."

For seconds, the men at the table struggled to digest the enormity of Hannon's words.

"How about survivors in the area?" Abe Stern, the Mayor of New York asked, nodding towards the blue circle inside which were trapped, at that very moment, parhaps five million people.

"Survivors? In there?" Hannon gave the mayor a look of total incredulity. "There won't be any."

"Good God!" Stern gasped. For an instant he looked as though he was going to suffer a stroke.

"And fire?" asked Harold Brown, the Secretary of Defence.

"The fire this will create," Hannon replied, "will be unlike anything in human experience. If this device explodes, it's going to release a heat burst that'll set houses on fire all over Westchester County, New Jersey and Long Island.

"You'll have tens, hundreds of thousands of wooden houses bursting into flames like matches exploding."

Hannon glanced at his map. "Inside the first circle, what will happen first is the thermal pulse, the heat of the fireball, will be passed little diminished through the glass sheaths of all those modern buildings in the centre of Manhattan.

"Now, when you look inside those glass skycrapers, what do you see? Curtains. Rugs. Desks covered with paper. In other words, fuel. What will happen is, you'll have a million fires lit instantly on Park Avenue. Then, of course, the blast will hit and turn the place into piles of smoking rubbish."

"Christ!" one of the deputies along the conference room wall said. "Imagine those poor people in those glass buildings!"

"Actually," Hannon replied, "according to our calculations, glass buildings may turn out to be less dangerous than you'd imagine provided, of course, they're well away from the shot.

"At the enormous pressures those things generate, those glass structures are going to fragment into millions of tiny pieces which are not going to have a high degree of penetration. I mean, they'll make you look like a pincushion, but they won't kill you."

"We'll begin having survivors, Hannon continued, "inside the second circle, three to six miles from ground zero. He mechanically ran his finger along the circle's red circumference encompassing the guts of the most important metropolitan area in the world. Fifty per cent of the population in this area will be killed. Forty per cent will be injured. Ten per cent will survive."

"Do you mean to tell me only one New Yorker in ten there is going to come out unscathed?" the President asked. "Half of them are going to die?"

" Yes, Sir."

"What about the impact of this on your other areas?" the President queried.

"Most of Jersy City, Upper Manhattan and Flatbush are just going to fall over. Low rise buildings will collapse. Anything under 10 stories will come down."

"How about the fall-out?" the President queried.

"God forbid, Sir, if there is an onshore wind blowing when this thing explodes to drive the fall-out up into New York State and New England, it'll contaminate a swathe of land thousands of miles square. Right up into Vermont. Nobody will be able to live there for generations to come."

"Look, Mr Whatever-your name-is," Abe Stern had begun to recover his composure. "I'd like to know one thing from you. God forgive me for using the expression for something like this, but I want the bottom line. How many of my people are going to be killed if this thing goes off?"

"The total dead, Sir, for the conditions we've been given in the five boroughs and New Jersey would be 6.74 million." ■

THE WORLD

PLO's passage to America

Leopold Sedar Senghor

Leopold Sedar Senghor (74), ex-President of Senegal, has accepted the role of intermediary between the USA and the PLO at the latter's request. Under Mr Senghor, Senegal was the first black African country to recognise the PLO. He will carry what Arafat wants conveyed to President Reagan who has publicly condemned the PLO as a terrorist organisation.

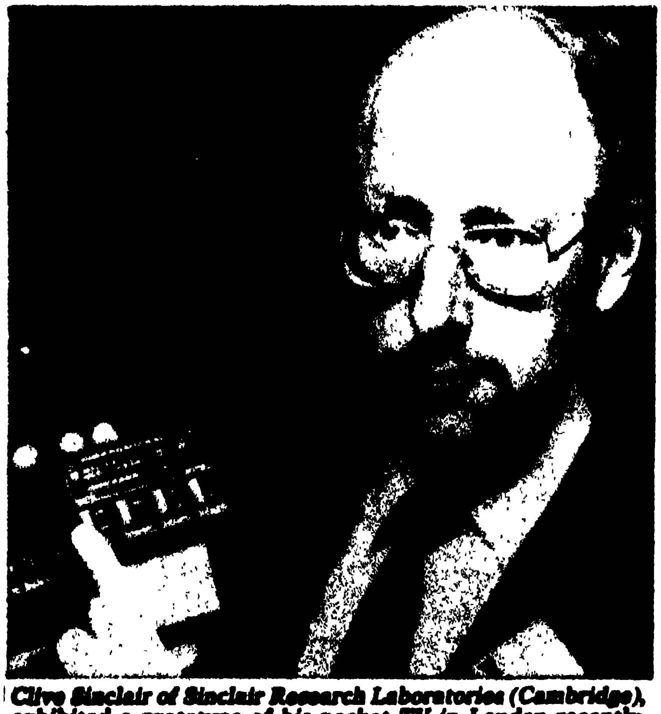
Yasser Arafat

Khomeini hits out—again

Ayatollah Khomeini reacted angrily to the attempt by the high-powered 12-member Islamic team to bring peace to Iran and Iraq. The mission, which was set up during the Islamic summit in January in Saudi Arabia, included such luminaries as the Presidents of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Guinea, and the Prime Minister of Turkey. On the eve of the mission's departure from Tehran on 1 March, after several rounds of talks, Khomeini went on the air to criticise its priorities. He urged the members of the mission to "bring the aggressor (Iraq) to trial, punish the aggressor and send away those who trespass in our country;" he also asked them to "give up hollow words" and to openly condemn the Iraqi government under President Saddam Hussein. Addressing the delegates he said, "You and the other people who were at the Taif conference listened to Saddam's ...nonsense words for 80 minutes while his army was killing our people inside our country." He ended his tirade with an impassioned question: "He (President Hussein) said Iran was the aggressor and you did not ask him 'How come Iran could be the aggressor?' Are we fighting inside Iraqi territory?"

Ayatollah Khomeini

Mini-TV



Clive Sinclair of Sinclair Research Laboratories (Cambridge), exhibited a prototype of his pocket TV in London recently. The tiny set has a flat picture tube and an incorporated FM radio. It is expected to go into production next year at a new factory in Dundee (Scotland) and will sell for £ 50.

Swiss sex

In the last week of February, it was sex which figured prominently in the Swiss press. This followed the recommendations of a group which was set up to suggest changes in the Swiss penal code. Child psychologists and church groups have been outraged by the recommendation to provide legislation for sex at the age of 14, incest between brothers and sisters and parent and adult child, prostitution, homosexuality, adultery and "erotic centres."

Briefly

Harvard is anti-racist

Harvard University, maintaining its stand against apartheid in South Africa, has sold its investments of nearly $50 million in Citibank, because of Citibank's favourable policy towards South Africa.

Japan needs Iran

Japan will resume importing Iranian oil sometime this month; four per cent of its total crude imports (180,000, barrels a day) will once again be supplied by Iran, after a ten-month suspension which was prompted by the US hostages issue.

Chrysler suffers

Chrysler, the US company famous for its Dodge cars, suffered a loss of $1.7 billion in 1980, according to the statement issued recently by the company. This was the biggest annual loss in American corporate history.

Afghanistan dropped

Afghanistan's membership to the Islamic Development Bank was suspended after a decision taken by the bank's governors in Khartoum recently.

New galaxies

Three US scientists from California and Arizona have sighted new galaxies, some ten billion light years away from the earth; this report appeared in the 2 March issue of the American *Astrophysics Journal.*

Brezhnev's family plan

Soviet President Brezhnev's son, first deputy foreign trade minister Yuri Brezhnev, has got a promotion: at a recent meeting of the central committee of the Soviet Communist Party, he was voted into the committee, though with the junior rank of an alternative member. President Brezhnev's son-in-law and number two man in the KGB, General Semen Tsvigun, was also given a promotion—from alternate to full member of the committee.

Leonid Brezhnev

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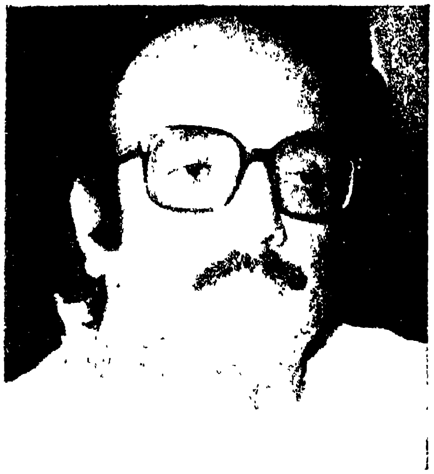
The woes of a lonely Congress(I) chief minister

Jagannath Pahadia inducts new cabinet members but the infighting continues.



N S Bhatti

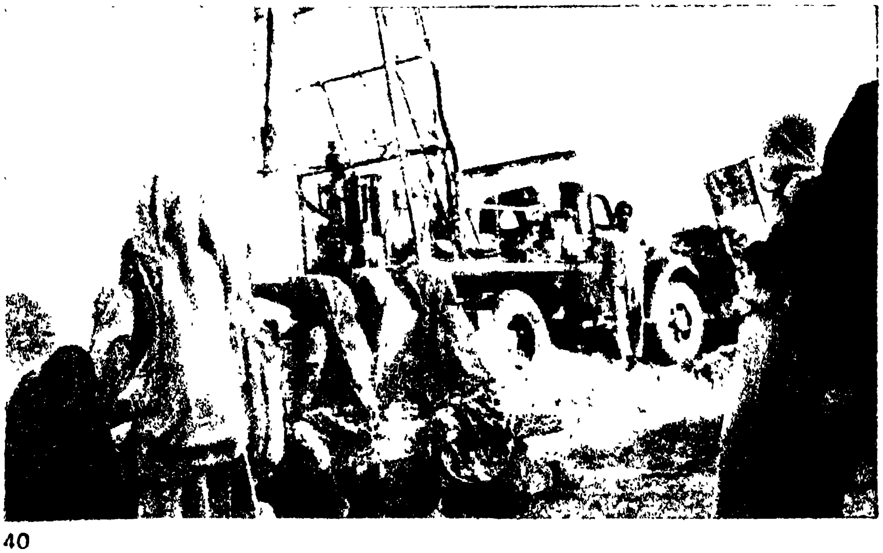
Jaipur: This is going to be Rajasthan's summer of discontent—politically—for the ruling Congress(I). The infighting within the ruling party which had hitherto been kept behind "closed doors" has burst out into the open—much to the discomfiture of the state chief minister Jagannath Pahadia. Mr Pahadia is convinced that he has only one loyal supporter within the Congress(I) and that is Jagannath Pahadia. If he had any doubts regarding the loyalty of his only supporter, the proceedings within the Vidhan Sabha on 27 February only underlined the fact that he was not only alone but was also a viciously-cornered man.

On 27 February there was turmoil in the House after the opposition parties and members of the press boycotted the day's proceedings in protest against the government's partisan handling of the beating up of pressmen during the Weir by-election on 23 November 1980, in which the CM was himself a candidate What followed was unprecedented· as MLA after MLA shot volleys of allegations against the CM complaining of maladministration, non-governance, etc, Mr Pahadia found he had nothing to say. And what was even more amazing was that none of his cabinet members spoke a word on his or the government's behalf. It was for the first time in the history of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha that the chief minister was not permitted to complete his reply in the debate on the motion of thanks to the Governor by his own partymen. The speaker attempted to calm the members but he was unsuccessful and remained a silent spectator to the CM's humiliation. Even the chief whip of the party tried to pacify the agitated members but he was virtually shouted down. The Congress(I) members' united protest against their own government was due to maladministration, nepotism, inadequate famine relief, the power crisis, stoppage of development work, shortage of essential commodities and the deteriorating law and order situation.

These factors coupled with many others had, immediately after Sanjay Gandhi's death, virtually numbered the days of the shaky Pahadia ministry. But Mr Pahadia saved his *gaddi* and his ministry by making a quick about-turn. He shook hands with Narendra Singh Bhatti, deputy minister in the Rajasthan government and an old friend of Mr Rajiv Gandhi. Although Mr Bhatti was inducted in the cabinet as early as June 1980, he remains the only deputy minister who has not been allotted any portfolio. When Mr Bhatti sued Mrs Maneka Gandhi in a defamation suit on 24 January (*Sunday* 11 January 1981), the Rajasthan CM thought it was the opportunity to ease him out of the cabinet. Mr Pahadia sent some of his deputy ministers to convince Mrs Gandhi that Mr Bhatti was not needed in the cabinet anymore But the Prime Minister disappointed them when she firmly put her foot down on the demand for the ouster. And a few days later Mrs Gandhi along with Mr Rajiv Gandhi and his wife, Sonia, visited Jaisalmer Mr Gandhi refused to accept government hospitality and went sight-seeing in a car driven by none other than Mr Bhatti. At the end of the tour, Mrs Gandhi showered her affections on the sons of Mr Bhatti.

The partiality towards Mr Bhatti made the CM realise that he had indeed been thinking on different lines about him. He revised his plans and promised Mr Bhatti that he would be upgraded to cabinet rank soon. Mr Pahadia received the green signal for a cabinet expansion along with the list of new incumbents, through Bhatti. N. S. Bhatti's name was on the list. At the chief minister's invitation Bhatti reached the Raj Bhavan to be sworn in. The ceremony began and ended and to his surprise Bhatti found himself still a deputy minister. The swearing-in ceremony ended the Pahadia-Bhatti alliance abruptly.

Drought relief work in CM Pahadia's village



PHAL S GIROTA

Perhaps to smoothen out his political path, the CM has extended his hand of friendship towards a section of the Congress(I) through the former CM Mohanlal Sukhadia. He has already managed to appease the group by making two of them ministers in the nine-member cabinet expansion. Interestingly, one of them is Chand Mal Baid, whom Pahadia once wanted to expel from the party. Mr Pahadia went further: at the swearing-in ceremony he touched Mr Sukhadia's feet in public.

But touching Mr Sukhadia's feet and expanding the cabinet has had little impact on the unity of the party. The Congress(I) legislature party continues to be a divided house. The wrangling has worsened, mostly caused by those who had been promised berths in the cabinet and subsequently left out. Muslim and Gujjar Congress (I) MLAs held meetings separately after the cabinet expansion to register their protest against inadequate representation of their communities. For the moment, no one is willing to listen to the CM and be pacified.

Milap Chand Dandia

TRUE LOVE

It even conquers political wars

New Delhi: Mahatma Gandhi may have become irrelevant for today's politicians today, but Shakespeare certainly is not. A real-life Romeo and Juliet drama rocked the Himachal Pradesh Congress(I) in the first week of March: Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi were also, inadvertently, dragged into the drama. One senior office-bearer of the Himachal Congress(I) found himself in police custody for a few hours on charges of kidnapping the daughter of a party MP. Ultimately, our Romeo and Juliet ended their 1981 drama by being blessed by none other than the Prime Minister of India after their wedding. So there was a happy ending this time.

The drama began on 2 March, when the brother of a senior party functionary of Himachal Pradesh, accompanied by the daughter of a lady MP from that state, went to the Tis Hazari courts and filed an affidavit saying that they were both majors and intended getting married according to Hindu rites. They stated that their families were opposed to the marriage, and, therefore, the girl had run away from home. The purpose of the affidavit was that in case the girl's family complained to the police, then the police would know that she had not been abducted. The girl was a khatri and the boy a brahmin. And their respective politician kin were bitterly opposed to each other. So neither the boy nor the girl had told their relatives of their love affair.

After filing the affidavit, however, the boy went and told his brother, who was then camping in Delhi. The brother, who is young, reacted sharply to the idea, but considering the stage that the matters had reached, agreed to organise a quick wedding. The wedding was held on 2 March at the Arya Samaj Temple at Mandir Marg, according to Hindu rites, and a few young Congress(I) MPs were present on the occasion.

The lady MP learnt about her daughter's marriage a day later; and immediately raised a hue and cry. She charged her opponent (the bridegroom's father) with having kidnapped her daughter. Since the MP was friendly with the wife of Delhi's police commissioner Bhinder, the Delhi police swung into action, and around ten on the night of 4 March two jeeploads of policemen stormed the Himachal Pradesh guest house in the Kasturba Gandhi Marg apartments and arrested the young officebearer of the Himachal Congress(I). He was taken to the Tilak Marg police station and interrogated. When the facts became known, the police apologised and let him go in the early hours of 5 March.

The drama then shifted to Parliament house the next day. The girl's mother went to the PM's office in Parliament and complained to R. K. Dhawan that her political opponent had conspired to wreck her family life. The matter reached the PM and Rajiv Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi was pleased to learn that an inter-caste marraige had taken place between two people belonging to wealthy families, without any exchange of dowry. He invited the couple over to 1, Safdarjung Road, where Mrs Gandhi met and blessed them.

Our Delhi Correspondent

MADHYA PRADESH

The arrest of Shankar Niyogi

Bhopal: What began as a war of advertisements (*Sunday*, 18 January) has turned into a pitched battle between Shankar Guha Niyogi, organising secretary of the Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh of Rajahara iron ore mines of Bhilai plant in Durg district and the state government. On 11 February, Niyogi and Sahdev Sahu were invited by the state government for negotiations at Durg. No sooner had the two leaders reached Durg when they were told that they were being detained under the National Security Act (NSA).

As news of the arrest spread, 7,500 labourers of the workers'cooperative societies of Rajahara went on strike. Then began the systematic arrest of all workers violating prohibitory orders under Section 144. Workers arrested were taken to some distance and dispersed by bursting teargas shells. Events, however, took a serious turn on 15 February when Niyogi's wife, Asha, defying the ban along with a thousand labourers were picked up by the police. The trucks carrying Asha and mostly old people and children drove into the Manpur forest, notorious for its wolves. There they were left to fend for themselves. It was only the next day that these people found their way home with the help of villagers and without any food or drink.

Meanwhile, 10,000 workers and *kisans* are preparing to court arrest by defying prohibitory orders daily in batches of two hundred. Till date authorities have arrested 75 workers including two Lok Dal leaders—the president and general secretary of the Lok Dal, Purshottam Kaushik and Mahesh Tiwari. Both the leaders had gone to assess the reports of police excess and had been arrested. Even R. Kupuswamy the UNI correspondent who had accompanied the two leaders was arrested on 21 February. He was detained in spite of disclosing his identity.

What was the root of the clash between Niyogi and the state government? Apparently, the clash between the industries minister Jhumuklal Bhedia, liquor contractors and Niyogi took a serious turn when Bhedia suddenly charged his political rival, Vidhya Charan Shukla, with having joined hands with Niyogi against the industries minister. Shukla, who was at Rajahara on 18 February addressed a public meeting in which he declared that Bhedia's allegations were foolish and that only a mentally imbalanced person could make such charges. Caught in the crossfire between the two Congress(I) leaders, Niyogi had to pay with his arrest.

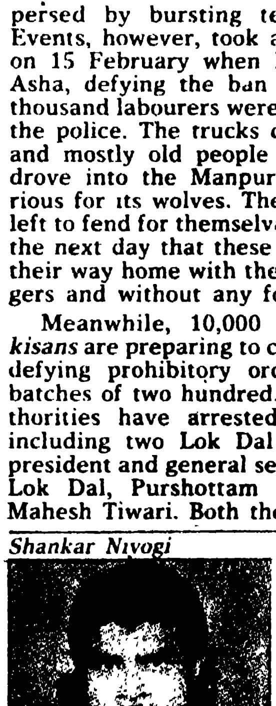
And the other side of the story? According to S. S. Porte, the collector of Durg, who had ordered the arrest of Niyogi, the arrest was made because it was being felt that his activities were destructive and violent. He and other members of his union were charged with repeatedly gheraoing of the mine's officials. In addition, the administration claims that Niyogi has been raising slogans and threatening non-Chhattisgarhis to leave Rajahara. According to the collector, there are about 30 cases registered against Niyogi, but people who have been affected by his activities are not willing to come forward as witnesses.

The state, however, still stands divided on the issue of the arrest. Political leaders have criticised the arrest. The state chief of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Kailash Thakare announced his decision to launch a *satyagraha* at Rajahara from 27 February as a protest. He was, however, dissuaded by his party members. Instead the BJP members held a public meeting at Kusumkasa to protest against the arrest. What surprised many was the fact that not only the INTUC, but the CPI-controlled AITUC and HMS and other local trade unions have been justifying Niyogi's arrest.

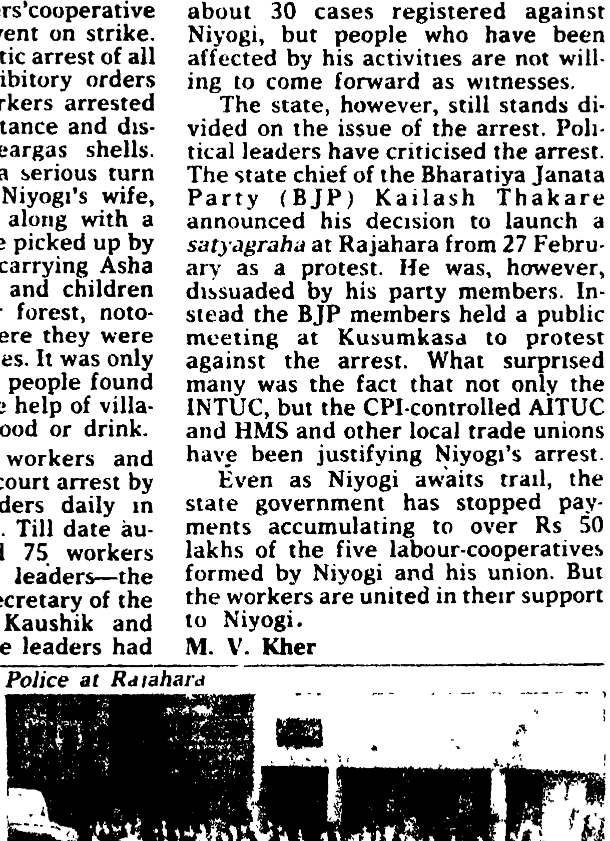
Even as Niyogi awaits trail, the state government has stopped payments accumulating to over Rs 50 lakhs of the five labour-cooperatives formed by Niyogi and his union. But the workers are united in their support to Niyogi.

M. V. Kher

Shankar Niyogi



Police at Rajahara



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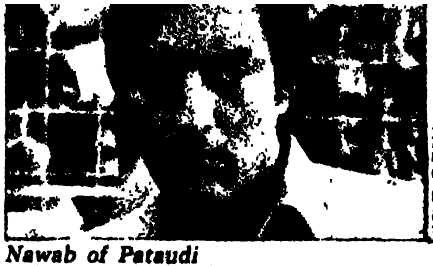
STATUTORY WARNING CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

NATIONAL HOCKEY

Who represents Bhopal?



Nawab of Pataudi

New Delhi: The rivalry between two young MPs, Gufran Azam and Kamal Nath, has even affected the 76 hockey clubs in Bhopal. The result: two rival teams turned up at the national hockey championships at Jullundur and claimed to represent Bhopal. One team owed allegiance to the Bhopal Hockey Association (BHA) led by the Nawab of Pataudi and Aftabuddin (this was recognised as the Aftabuddin group) and the other claimed to represent the Bhopal Hockey Association led by former Olympian Aslam Sher Khan and Vijay Gupta. The sympathies of Gufran Azam, himself a vice-president of the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF), are with the Aftabuddin group. Aslam Sher Khan, who had unsuccessfully contested the last Vidhan Sabha polls on a Congress(I) ticket, has the support of Kamal Nath.

On 2 March the Bhopal team sent by the BHA (Aftabuddin group) was not allowed to field a side against Himachal Pradesh at Jullundur. The IHF and the host association for this year's nationals, the Punjab Hockey Association, took one full day to settle the dispute regarding the credentials of the two rival teams claiming to represent Bhopal and it was only on 3 March that Bhopal could field a team (of the Aftabuddin group) against Rajasthan. Politicking had taken its toll. The well-trained Bhopal outfit, which has some international probables like Yusuf, Khurshid and Akbar Rafiq, managed to scrape past Rajasthan by winning 4-3. The Aslam Sher Khan group was not recognised as the official team and the IHF told the Bhopal team to reach a "compromise" formula by including some of the players of the Aslam Sher Khan group (the system of "compromise" seem confined not only to politics). But the Aslam group refused to join the Aftabuddin team, so a "pure" Aftabuddin team was fielded against Rajasthan on 3 March.

The history of the present controversy in Bhopal's hockey association dates back to the pre-Assembly election period. Aslam Sher Khan wanted to contest the elections. He went to his friend and mentor Gufran Azam, MP and a former general secretary of the Indian Youth Congress for help. (Aslam Sher Khan had started playing hockey in Safia College, Bhopal, where Gufran was the teacher in-charge of sports. Later Aslam played his first club hockey from Carbamets, of which Gufran is an office-bearer. Aslam later played for the Indian Airlines and represented India. He resigned from the Indian Airlines to contest the Assembly elections.) Gufran refused to help Aslam in getting a ticket. Aslam then went to Kamal Nath, who was then an all-powerful personality in the Congress (I) as Sanjay Gandhi was alive. Kamal Nath helped Aslam to get a ticket, but could not help him to win the election, which Aslam lost by a huge margin.

Aslam may have lost the elections, but the polls certainly brought him close to Kamal Nath. In turn he got alienated from Gufran. He started getting involved in the local politics of the hockey association, which is headed by the Nawab of Pataudi, Mansur Ali Khan. (The Nawab's mother is the Begum of Bhopal. And after her the Nawab's wife, Sharmila Tagore, will be the Begum of Bhopal). Aftabuddin is presently the secretary of the BHA. The present body was elected three years ago. Before that for seven years Vijay Gupta was the secretary. Aslam joined hands with Vijay Gupta and demanded elections in the BHA. The association's president, M. A. K. Pataudi, agreed to hold fresh elections. The date was fixed: 30 April. Within that time the voters' list has to be published and kept open for scrutiny. The final voters' list has to be published after that, nominations for the elections invited, scrutinised and the elections will then be held. All this had to be completed. In between, however, the nationals were coming up. So the elections were postponed and a new date was fixed. On 28 February, Aslam and Gupta called a parallel meeting of the general body. They claimed that the IHF had sent an observer (the IHF denies this) and got themselves elected as office-bearers and agreed to send a team to the Jullundur nationals beginning on 1 March. The team was sent and the resultant chaos is now history.

The role of the IHF is certainly not above criticism. When the association

Will someone please stop Kalpnath Rai's gibberish?

New Delhi: We have a "handsome" Prime Minister who needs "unconstitutional" support, according to AICC(I) general secretary, Kalpnath Rai, MP. Rai specialises in issuing press releases. And in each release he warns the opposition and reminds them that the people are with his party. That is his right. But he always issues the notes in English, and murders the Queen's language. That too may be his right as a nationalist Indian, but does he have the right to issue hilarious press releases on AICC(I) letterheads, in which he is supposed to hold out the official views of the party led by Indira Gandhi?

On 7 March the AICC(I) office issued a press note (No. 58/'81) signed by general secretary Kalpnath Rai. "Currently there is a glamour on the part of the opposition that Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi is not serious about a meaningful dialogue with them on national issues." (What Rai wanted to say, perhaps, was that there is a 'clamour'; he used 'glamour'). He went on to warn the countrymen that there was a "danger of precarious global situation on our doorsteps." Rai posed a question: "Is it not a fact that US, Sino-Pak, Japan axis is only directed against India?" (Kudos to Rai for this theory, but is it the official view of his party?)

In view of the above "threats," Rai called for a "moratorium on strikes, marches and *gheraos*." (Congress-I-sponsored rallies, of course, being exempt from this moratorium.) Rai regretted the attitude of the opposition, which, he deplored, "is adopting line of confrontation and militant agitations in the name of so-called various problems." He took 30 lines to deplore the opposition's "attitude" and dismissed the Assam and Gujarat problems in a five-line paragraph, describing them as "most reprehensible and repugnant and is against weaker sections."

Affirming that the "Congress will never compromise with the principles and ideology for which Father of Nation gave up his life," Rai said that it was the "pious duty" of "all really socialist progressive and democratic forces," to "strengthen the handsome Prime Minister so that India stands as one united nation." Rai attacked only two opposition leaders by name—Raj Narain and Atal Behari Vajpayee (in that order). His main complaint with the opposition was that they have not been responding to the PM's "real and sincere" efforts for a national dialogue on major problems. "Her vision is clear and consistent, she wants peace and security on the home front and outside in the world," Rai asserted.

Reiterating that his party stood by the election pledges to all sections of the society and claiming that the farmers were getting the best deal ever now, Rai condemned the CPI and the Janata party (in that order) for supporting the "kulaks." He asserted that, "We have to give first to the interests of poor farmers, agricultural labourers, and the consumers of India. For this we are bent upon curbing inflation and increase productivity at all levels on every front. This task needs an active and unconstitutional support of all the sections of the society."

Mr Rai seems to have achieved what many commentators have been predicting: converted politics into complete gibberish. Three cheers for Kalpnath Rai.

Our Delhi Correspondent

led by Pataudi and Aftabuddin is the recognised body (which notified that fresh elections would be held in April) why did the IHF president, I. M. Mahajan, enter into correspondence with the association led by Aslam Sher Khan? Also, the hosts, Punjab Hockey Association (PHA), refused to recognise the credentials of the Aftabuddin team, which possesses official IHF papers, and asked the two warring groups to settle the dispute amicably. In this context, another interesting political angle was narrated to this correspondent by a Madhya Pradesh MP. According to him, the PHA president, Mr Anand, is related to Mrs Amteshwar Anand, the late Sanjay Gandhi's mother-in-law. Kamal Nath and Mrs Anand's blessings were with the Aslam group, so the PHA refused to recognise the Aftabuddin group on the first day. The intervention by IHF authorities ultimately solved the tangle, but only after damage had been done. Aslam Sher Khan was surely an excellent hockey international. But his entry in politics has been less than joyous.

Our Delhi Correspondent

WITCHCRAFT

There is nothing like *Bhanamati*

Bangalore: Strange stories of sorcery, of people suddenly going mad, of people talking in alien tongues, of women receiving strange wounds on their bodies, of healthy cattle dying suddenly without any reasons in the two Karnataka districts, Gulbarga and Bidar, made front page news in several newspapers in July 1980 (*Sunday* 17

A sorcerer at his trade

August 1980). Known as the *Bhanamati* phenomenon it lasted for more than three months before the government appointed an investigative team to inquire into the strange events. Since then very few incidents have occured.

The *Bhanamati* investigating committee was headed by Dr H. Narasimhaiah, the former VC of Bangalore university, a controversial figure who has made himself very "unpopular" by his incessant attack on godmen, specially the Sathya Sai Baba. Other members of the team were Dr G. N. Reddy, physician, Dr (Mrs) Vinoda N. Murthy, psychologist, Dr H. S. Narayanan, psychiatrist and a couple of legislators.

After four months of investigations, the committee came to the "unanimous and firm conclusion that the so-called *Bhanamati* is not due to supernatural causes." The report candidly discussed the problems of a number of people who were supposed to have been afflicted by *Bhanamati*. Many of the problems attributed to *Bhanamati* were nothing but incidents caused by simple psychological factors which were complicated by the all-pervasive stories of sorcerers on the prowl.

Take these examples: A 60-year-old woman was found behaving abnormally for six months. She would talk to herself, cry, and scream that some people were after her. She said she would be arrested, and was going to be killed by her children. She said she kept on hearing strange voices which frightened her. A detailed examination by the probe team revealed that the woman was stone deaf and not physically ill in any way. Elderly persons with deafness are known to suffer from an illness called paraphrenia. But the lady in distress and her relatives believed that she was a victim of *Bhanamati*. Once the lady was put under psychiatric care, her problems vanished.

Then there was the case of a 25-year-old man who constantly complained of abdominal discomfort in the mornings. Once again, his family believed that sorcerers and witches had cast their spell on him. Detailed medical investigations, however, revealed that the young man was in the habit of drinking copious amounts of water before going to bed, a practice he had made into an obsession. All that he suffered from was a distended bladder and hence the discomfort.

However, while the probe team have been able to explain some of the supernatural occurances, explanations are still wanting in other cases. Take the case of the 16-year-old married girl who had mysterious black wounds on her body and exhibited strange behaviour. The behaviour was attributed to bouts of hysteria, but the black wounds were yet to be explained. "Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that she was the only daughter-in-law of a large joint family," was all that the report could come up with.

Arthur Pais

Screen villians escape attack

MILAN STUDIO

Amjad Khan

Bombay: February was a cruel month for two of the Hindi screen's villains: Amjad Khan and Shakti Kapoor. They found themselves on the receiving end when they were attacked by hoodlums.

On 21 February, Amjad Khan, was waylaid by a gang of hoodlums on the Juhu-Tara Road. They smashed the windscreen of the filmstar's Mercedes. Armed with iron rods the hoodlums tried to beat up the *Sholay* villain but they found that he was indeed a brave man. As Amjad fought back the hoodlums escaped. From the next morning, however, a more wary Amjad Khan has begun carrying a pistol with him wherever he goes. He even practices shooting every day.

Shakti Kapoor, the *Qurbani* villain was fortunate enough to escape knife injuries, when thieves broke into his flat on 25 February. When Shakti was out shooting at Natraj Studios for Dev Anand's new film, *Swami Dada*, two strangers paid a visit to his flat asking for him. Since the filmstar lives alone, his servant answered the door. The strangers left when they were told that Shakti was out shooting. Later, two other strangers rang the bell at Shakti's flat and told the servant that Shakti had asked them to wait in his flat till his return from the shooting. As soon as they were let in, the strangers whipped out knives they had strapped to their ankles. They cornered the servant, tied him up and began emptying out the cupboards. At this point, a neighbour, whom Shakti describes as a very obstinate lady, rang the bell. She kept on ringing the bell. Unnerved by the persistent ringing the thieves let the servant open the door but only after they put a knife to his back warning him he should not shout for help. But the servant showed a lot of guts, pulled himself free and ran out of the flat shouting, "*Chor, chor!* (Thief, thief)" The thieves lost their nerves and fled.

Anil Saari

Shakti Kapoor

DURGAPRASAD

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI

'Indian Muslims find themselves in danger'

Arab delegates at the session

Hyderabad : Delegates came in thousands, beyond the expectation of the organisers, to attend the sixth All-India Ijtema of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and the 15th century Hijri celebrations which concluded on 22 February at Wadi-e-Huda, 10 kms from here The support which the delegates gave to the conference showed that the Jamaat had not lost its faithful with the ban imposed on it during the Emergency. And the organisers also went out to make the conference a success: a temporary auditorium had been constructed over 375,000 sq.ft.—enough to accommodate 2,00,000 delegates or alternately 1,25,000 *namazis*. A separate auditorium had been built to accommodate 15,000 ladies. Twenty-five residential blocks were constructed for the delegates over seven lakh sq.ft. There was even a separate block for the female delegates. And five lakh local Muslims—men, women and children—joined in the celebrations besides 60,000 delegates who came from all over the country. The AP State Road Transport Corporation had initially made arrangements to run 15 buses as "Wadi-e-Huda specials" but they had to press more than 100 buses into service.

The Ijtema began with the *Qutba* (presidential remarks) which took the Amir-e-Jamaat, Maulana Mohammed Yusuf, more than an hour to read. The Maulana spoke about the *Ummat-e-Muslimah* (the Muslim community), its role in the world, the duties and responsibilities of Indian Muslims, the question of unity among Indian Muslims, secularism and socialism, the moral degeneration in the wake of scientific and technological advancement, the need for an equitabble economic order, the Palestine issue, Afghanistan, the status of Muslim minorities in different countries, the role of the Islamic movements and the "blessings" of Islamic revival. He was worried over the situation of the Muslims in India since in the post-Independence period "the 12 per cent population of this country finds itself in a dangerous situation from the communal elements, the police and the administration."

The Maulana also attacked the communities who, he claimed, had benefitted from the present chaos in the country. He warned Indians in general and Muslims in particular to beware of the communities. Said he: "Muslims should understand fully that communism can neither tolerate Islam in the national life nor on the international plane."

The Ijtema brought into sharp focus, the differences between the Jamaat and the government of India. The Amir-e-Jamaat claimed that foreign delegates had been denied visas to attend the conference. He said that Indian missions in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Egypt and Pakistan had refused visas to those who wanted to attend the Ijtema.

Among the foreign dignitaries who attended the Ijtema were Sheikh Abdulllah al-Zayed and Sheikh Omer Fullatah from th Islamic University of Medina, Dr Abdullah al-Turki from Ibn-e-Saud Islamic University, Sheikh Lukman Salafi from Riyadh University, Dr Ahmed Tutoonji of World Assembly of Muslim League, Dr Tanzeem Wasati of the UK Islamic Mission, Dr Yakub Mirza of MSA (the USA), and Syedna Zainab Al-Ghazali, a female delegate of Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen of Egypt. The Imam-e-Jam of Teheran nd member of the Supreme Defence Council of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenai, also attended the Ijtema as the special envoy of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The Jamaat-e-Islami had also organised the "Aks-e-Hudu" (Images of God) Islamic Exhibition at the Wadi-e-Huda. Through a series of photographs, charts, sketches and paintings, the Exhibition portrayed the various aspects of Islam and its teachings. Another "highlight" of the Ijtema was the "Associates' Meet" where as many as 2,000 non-Muslims participated and exchanged views on Islam.

The chief organiser of the Ijtema and the Andhra Pradesh Jamaat chief, Maulana Abdul Aziz, and the All-India Jamaat Chief, Maulana Mohammed Yusuf, claimed that funds for the Ijtema had been raised locally. Nothing had been received from Arab or Iranian sources. Maulana Aziz had initially estimated the expenditure on the Ijtema at Rs 10 lakhs. Later though he revised the figure to Rs 20 lakhs, the expenditure could have been anything between Rs 25 and 35 lakhs.

Syed Majeedul Hasan

Jamaat finds a foothold in Egypt

Cairo: The Jamaat-e-Islami, often referred to as the Muslim Society is now making itself felt in Egypt. With a membership of around 100,000 consisting essentially of high school and university students, the Jamaat emerged as a full-fledged organisation three years ago although its underground activities had been going on for several years. Its members are dedicated almost to the point of being fanatical, disciplined and extremely well-organised and have the open support of policemen including some middle-ranking officers. Although it began as nothing more than a religious philanthropic organisation dedicated to student welfare, the Jamaat is gradually replacing the Muslim Brotherhood which until a short while ago was considered to be the only alternative to President Sadat's rule in Egupt. The aim of both the groups is the formation of an Egyptian Islamic state and there is close cooperation between the two groups. In fact some of the senior positions in the Jamaat are held by Brothers (members of the Brotherhood). Impatient of the ageing members of the Brotherhood, the Jamaat is now expanding its own sphere of influence from the student community in schools and universities to the Muslim community in general. Accordingly, a large centre is being constructed in Abbasieh near Cairo and consists of a library, clinic and a day-care centre apart from a mosque and an assembly hall. It is believed that the Jamaat is being funded by Saudi Arabia which had been financing the Brotherhood; substantial sums are also being received from devout Egyptian businessmen.

Our Special Correspondent

TAMIL NADU

Will MGR abolish dry laws?

Madras: Will the prevalent drought in the ten districts of the state and the demands of the farmers sound the death knell of MGR's most cherished dream—prohibition? The AIADMK along with the CPI(M) legislators are demanding the relaxation of prohibition so as to enable the state to earn a revenue of at least Rs 300 crores each year. Already MGR's government has written off farmers' loans to the tune of Rs 60 crores. In addition, Rs 500 lakhs have been sanctioned for the implementation of drought relief schemes and water schemes for the drought-stricken areas.

MGR's initial reaction was one of no response primarily because he had used prohibition as one of the strongest issues in his campaign against Karunanidhi. In 1972, the former CM had suspended prohibition when MGR fell out with him and within a few months began organising rallies demanding the reintroduction of dry laws. The protests had been so strong that Karunanidhi reimposed the dry laws.

After assuming office of the CM in 1980, MGR introduced the strictest dry laws in the state. Anyone found drinking was liable to be punished with three months of RI and a fine; in the case of government servants, the fine and the jail sentence was double and the government servant was liable to lose his job. Prohibition laws have been relaxed since then. Today, any 30-year-old can obtain a permit that allows him to two units of hard liquor or 24 bottles of beer; with a medical certificate, this quota can be doubled. It is reported that already 2,24,000 people hold permits in the state. However, in view of the limited number of liquor shops, there is almost a perpetual liquor famine resulting in a thriving trade in illicit liquor.

With mounting pressure from not only the opposition but also his own partymen MGR is now considering an alternative to the existing dry laws. The CM is planning to reduce the permit rates from Rs 25 to Rs 5 and permitting restaurants to sell 'weak' beer, as is being done in Maharashtra. Certain days of the month will be declared dry and toddy will be made easily available in the villages. The AIADMK partymen have also suggested that the government should market arrack at cheap rates so that trade in illicit liquor is reduced. This, it is believed will not only reduce the race for permits but also ease the chaos prevailing on the law and order front in the state.

Arthur Pais

LABOUR RELATIONS

The strike is called off

Bangalore: The 77-day-old public sector strike of nearly 80,000 workers ended on 12 March but not before it had taken its toll in monetary losses and men: the five units together incurred a daily loss of Rs 1.5 crores and three people had died in police firing on 21 January during the Bangalore *bandh* (*Sunday* 1 February). The strike had been called by the Joint Action Front (JAF) comprising 12 unions of five public sector units: Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), Indian Telephone Industries (ITI), Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT). Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) and Bharat Earth Movers Ltd (BEML). The workers were demanding parity in wages with workers. On 10 and 11 March, the Karnataka CM R. Gundu Rao met leaders of the opposition and the JAF requesting them to withdraw the strike assuring them he would negotiate a settlement with the centre.

But before the strike was withdrawn there were attempts to break the resistance and the morale of the workers. Matters came to a head when at 9 pm on 5 March the JAF union headquarters on Queens Road was attacked. The casualties included the JAF convenor D. Rajagopal, MLC and state president of the Hindu Mazdoor Sabha and a few workers. The affair had all the trimmings of a mafia-inspired hit job. Unknown assailants in a maroon Ambassador drove up to the premises and attacked the office with soda bottles and iron rods. Commenting on the incident, the JAF joint convenors, Michael Fernandes MLA, M. S. Krishnan, S. Mahadevan and T. G. Srinivasamurthy said: "This is a war between 80,000 workers and Mr F. M. Khan, MP and his strike-breaking *goondas*. We have all along been peaceful. As a result on this *goondaism*, the government of Indian and the government of Karnataka despite their appeals can be sure that the strike will continue."

Rajya Sabha member F. M. Khan, who is also the state president of the INTUC (the Congress-I trade union) and a close associate of the chief minister retaliated to the JAF statement. He said if they wanted war, "we" (he meant the INTUC) would fight back. Later however, he told a newsman that the remark was not in response to the JAF leaders' statement but to an incident which had occurred four hours earlier in which an Ambassador car carrying some members of the National Students of India (NSI) and other supporters of Mr Khan was burnt at the ITI colony. They were on a door-to-door campaign requesting workers to return to their duties. Even before the strike was launched, Mr Khan had attempted to negotiate with the centre to give the INTUC a better standing among the workers. When his efforts had failed the Congress(I) MP had continued to act as a spokesman for the government without achieving any noticeable success in the negotiations. With no end of the strike in sight Mr Khan adopted means to pressurise the workers to bow down.

The unprecedented violence on the JAF created a furore in the city. The CITU president lashed out at Mr Khan at a mammoth joint general body meeting of all the striking trade unions on 7 March: "You can plant a planter as an MP in the Rajya Sabha but you cannot plant a planter as a leader of the working class...*Goondas* will be *goondas* whatever their labels."

And in the beginning of March it looked as if the strike would not end soon. But negotiations picked up momentum when the JAF leaders stated categorically in February that they would not stick to their original demand for pay parity with BHEL. This come-down by the strikers was obviously meant to facilitate an early settlement. And negotiations did start to end the strike.

Louise Fernandes

ORISSA

Lok Dal survey inspires *kisan* rally

Bhubaneswar : A majority of the farmers and agricultural labourers of the state do not get two square meals a day for five months each year. The state's rural electricity programme has been a failure and the introduction of hullers has increased the misery of the village widows whose only means of livelihood is husking paddy. These are some of the findings of the survey conducted by the Lok Dal in Orissa. Armed with 30,000 printed forms, the party's MLAs and functionaries went to the state's 141 constituencies between 30 January and 8 February 1981. Their object: a survey to assess the level of poverty in rural Orissa. The assessment was the brainchild of the veteran leader Biju Patnaik.

What they found was staggering. After 33 years of independence, the farmers and rural people are badly off. What they want is employment throughout the year at a minimum wage of Rs four or five a day. This has not been possible because of low investment in village and small-scale industries. Said Biju Patnaik after the survey : "I am convinced that the nation's industrial approach has to take a U-turn and the employed and under-employed must become the focal point of the national industrial planning and investment pattern. Two crores people out of the total population of 2.5 crores in the state living below the poverty line cannot bear their miseries any longer." He held out a warning: "There is going to be a bloody revolution."

The completion of the survey was followed by a massive *Kisan* rally, held under the aegis of the Lok Dal at Atabira in Sambalpur district. The rally was attended by over 20,000 farmers. Among the leaders who addressed the gathering was Chaudhury Charan Singh.

The survey and the rally underlined the fact that the Lok Dal was no longer a dormant party in the state. The rally was essential for the party's image since it has no farmers' leader of the stature of Sharad Joshi or Narayanaswamy Naidu. The slogans raised in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu for the better price of farm produce have caught on with the Lok Dal. But whether the party will be able to turn this into a full-fledged agitation will depend on its organisational ability. Biju Patnaik and the Lok Dal for the moment are riding the crest of popularity with the present Janaki Ballav Patnaik government failing on all fronts.

Swarup Jena

GOOD NEWS

The awardwinners

The Palekar award for journalist and non-journalist newspaper employees was implemented without fuss in two newspaper offices in Bhopal and Sambalpur—because they are run by one man or one family. The Hindi daily *Alok*, published from Bhopal, has only one employee; so its proprietor readily agreed to extend him all benefits of the award. The owners of *Koshala*, an Oriya daily from Sambalpur, belong to the same family. There is no outsider on the staff, and all the printing press workers are casual labourers.

Vehicle for the handicapped

Kali Vinod Tewari, physically handicapped since childhood, is among the courageous few who take up, and win, challenges. And Tewari's challenge was tough: he ventured to prove that men like him are assets, not liabilities, to society.

After years of effort, Tewari designed and made a vehicle for the disabled—a three-wheeler with a .35 cc engine which does a good 45 kms to the litre and reaches a maximum of 35 kmph. It is cheap, completely hand-controlled, including the start, and needs the minimum of force to operate. The vehicle was produced at a workshop Tewari runs in Kanpur. The district magistrate, Kanpur, introduced the vehicle at a fair organised by the special employment exchange for the disabled. Tewari was also given a shield for his fine work. Lucknow's Artificial Limbs Centre and rehabilitation centres in Kanpur, Calcutta and Jabalpur have already given Tewari's product their seal of approval; they have found it best suited to the needs of the disabled.

Growing care

Sneh Niketan in Jabalpur, the first private home for mentally retarded children in Madhya Pradesh, has come a long way. It was set up in 1974 with only three inmates. Today it is being run under the supervision of the Methodist Church of India, with 67 children on its rolls. It has a school, a 60-bed hostel, and a playground. Fifty-nine of the inmates are non-Christians, and 38 of them are living on scholarships of Rs 120 per month each from Kindernorthilfe, West Germany. The home has 27 boarders but no servants. The children on the campus wash their clothes and utensils.

Arthritis drug developed

The Regional Research Laboratory, Hyderabad, has discovered and developed a new non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic drug called tromaril. The drug, an anthranilic acid derivative coded "RH-8", whose chemical name is N-beta-phenylethyl-anthranilic acid and international non-proprietary name is enfenamic acid, was tried in more than 300 cases over four years. Even before it was subjected to human clinical trials, tromaril underwent pharmacological, biochemical and toxicological evaluation. In view of the excellent response of patients to the drug in open clinical trials of arthritis, episiotomy, transvaginal surgery, dentistry, trauma and in post-operative cases and good tolerance, "double blind clinical trials" were organised under the supervision of selected doctors to assess the drug's clinical efficacy in comparison with previously used drugs like oxyphenbutazone and placebo.

Just computers

The Allahabad High Court, which is among the courts with largest backlog of pending cases, is to acquire equipment that might solve most of its problems—computers to ensure speedy clearance of cases.

Cancer drug doing well

A five-member committee of doctors appointed by the West Bengal government to evaluate the efficacy of Sicafek, an anti-cancer drug developed by two Calcutta scientists, has come up with an encouraging report: the initial positive response of cervix cancer towards Sicafek has been "high". The drug had been developed in the early Seventies by Dr Jayasree Roy Chowdhury and Dr Himadri Chowdhury of the Chittaranjan National Cancer Research Centre (CNRC), Calcutta. It was first used on animals and then human patients. Human experiments have had to be limited to cervical cancer cases at the Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital on permission from the drug controller of India. Encouraged by the anti-tumour activity due to the drug, the committee has suggested trials on other types of cancer. It has also suggested combining the drug with radiation and other chemotherapeutic drugs for improving results. The condition of two cases reportedly improved from "inoperable" to "operable" following administration of Sicafek.

Crucial equipment

A score of the 100-odd cancer patients who visit Chandigarh's Post Graduate Institute of Medicine (PGI) can look forward to better days. The institute's radiotherapy treatment section is to have sophisticated new equipment that will make it possible to administer accurate doses of radiation to cancer patients and monitor their progress. The equipment includes a computerised optimisation system for radiotherapy planning, a thermoluminiscent dosimetry, a therapy simulator and a vacuum-forming machine. After it is commissioned on 1 April, the computer will plan the entire course of treatment, determine the dosage of radiation and ensure its distribution in tumorous regions with the minimum effect on healthy tissue—in less than 20 minutes, where the process once took five hours.

Improved drug for blindness

The Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Studies, New Delhi, which celebrated the 14th anniversary of its foundation on 10 March, claims a major achievement: it has developed an indigenous drug for the blinding eye disease, trachoma. The drug was obtained from a plant called *rasanjan*, clinically tested and found to be more effective than drugs like sulphacetamide, which were used previously.

KHAAS BAAT

Look who *Daboon Kapoor* is eyeing. None other than *Rati Agnihotri*, the north Indian girl from the south. She has promised to stay clear of South Indian films. That is indeed very convenient to Daboo. At every party, if ever Daboo happens to see Ms Agnihotri, he drops everything to rush to her. He then holds her attention with his wisecracks and of course, those fantastic eyes. Perhaps he had been doing all that on the instructions of his father because the Kapoor charm worked and Rati is starring in the next RK production.

Perhaps, it was also a lesson for *Tina Munim* who let her heart rule her head. Remember when Dabboo was giving her the eye she ditched him to go with *Dev Anand*. Well Papa Kapoor's son did not like it at all since he is very confident of his own likeability. Stop licking your wounds, Dabboo. We knew you had not lost the touch!

Talk of permissive pairs and the names that instantly come to mind are *Kabir* and *Protima*. When the *Hema-Dharam* affair sizzled the filmy industry, the Bedis lost their foothold. Nevertheless, they remain the original permissive pair. Kabir parks his American wife in Los Angeles where he has a house. And whenever he wants the Indian recipe for happiness, he jets in to Bombay. Recently he was here meeting his old friends and of course, ex-wife, Protima. When he is here he drowns himself in everything *desi*: his ex-wife, kids, home and even his favourite drink, rum and Thums Up!

Look what *Bindiya* is doing to herself. She has become a real *pativrata stree*. Everytime someone speaks of *Vinod Mehra* in her presence she starts acting coy, very much like a newly-married girl. In fact, she doesn't mention him by name, as wives of older generations still do. But Vinod should not be worried. Bindiya has been imaginative enough to give him a name. No she is no *angrez* to use 'my husband.' Being a true Indian she uses '*mere miya.*'

Deepti Naval

Zaheera

Rati Agnihotri

What's wrong with our *desi* starlets? Don't the producers like them any more these days? *Deepti Naval* started it all after the sheepish attempts of London-born *Zaheera*. Hardly had *Dara Singh* brought over the dazzling *Binny Rak*, the filmy grapevine was agog with stories of this smashing debonair actor who had done the rounds of the London stage and TV circuits. And if he is the guy *Shabana Azmi* is falling for, he must be a wow. And Shabana should know for *Marc Zuber*, (oops! I had forgotten to tell you his name), is starring with her in *Yeh Nazdeekiyan*. Let's hope that Marc, may there be more of his clan, can boo out the reigning superstars of the Hindi film world.

Naseeruddin Shah

DURGAPRASAD

NASEERUDDIN SHAH has created a name for himself in *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai*? They call him the Superactor. His acting as Albert Pinto is drawing full houses in this metropolis. And the big-name girls in the film industry are falling head over heels for him. *Rekha* being the number one in the queue.

I shudder to think what the *Manmohan Desais* and the *Subhash Ghais* would do to a superactor like Naseeruddin, if he lets them, that is. Look what happened to another National School of Drama product, *Raj Babbar*. He has been virtually reduced to a mannerism-ridden robot who stays in action through three four-hour shifts. Can we request the Desais and the Ghais to leave our superactor Naseeruddin Shah in peace? Let him be him.

KHAAS BAAT

Jayapradha seems to be holding the magic wand for box office hits. Jealous tongues have said that she was the one who brought luck to *Rishi Kapoor* and made *Sargam* a hit. Now, *Rajesh Khanna* seems to have taken the cue. He has great hopes of making *Dil e Naadan* a super hit. The film has some passionate love scenes of Rajesh and Jayapradha and it is a remake of a superhit starring *Kamalahasan, Sripriya* and *Rajnikant*. Rajesh is hoping for a miracle since two of his Madras-made films *Red Rose* and *Bandish* flopped. We pray for the success of the more promising *Dil e Nadaan*.

Madhumala: she could contact Deepa

What is *Deepa* doing to herself? The 16-year-old up-and-coming star already has a bustline that is being talked about in town, but more astonishing—it is still growing! Even her mother admits that "She looks so b-i-g." And all because Deepa has been swallowing 'vitamin' tablets brought in by a relative all the way from the United States. So, budding heroines with a bustline problem may please contact Deepa for details of her vitamin pills. Meanwhile Deepa had better take it easy on her pills or one of these days she might burst at her seams.

Things are not going right for ex-sex bomb *Jayabharathi* since she walked out on her lover *Harry Pothen. Sathar*, the man she got married to has been trying rather unsuccessfully to make it big. And Jayabharathi's own career isn't flourishing either. There are rumours that she is straining herself mentally and needs psychiatric help. And to crown it all, there was an income tax raid on her house. But what do you think they collected? A paltry Rs 50,000. Wonder what happened to all the money she got by baring herself in a dozen-and-a-half Malayalam films.

Surekha and Pratap Pothen: a still from Thakara

Vijay Anand and Lakshmishree: how low can you get?

Not all films from the south need to be extravaganzas. *M. S. Basu*, a journalist has written and produced a Tamil film, *Nenjodu Nenjum*, on a paltry budget of a little more than a lakh rupees. It is one of the few black-and-white films to hit the screen in recent times. How did Basu manage on his tight budget? Says he: "We used only one car, my hero *Vijayanand* and heroine *Lakshmishree*, travelled in the same vehicle with the unit members; the car was always jam-packed. And we carried the shooting equipment in the car itself-...We shot on unknown locations around the city, and we shot so fast that hardly anyone knew what was going on...so we didn't ask for any police protection." *Nenjodu* is the story of how an impotent husband solves his bedroom problem in a novel way. He spots a man who looks and behaves exactly like him (Miracle of miracles even the voice is the same!) and persuades him to sleep with his unsuspecting wife played by Lakshmishree, who committed suicide a few months ago.

Basu, incidentally is planning a bilingual film in Tamil and Hindi, *Dasarathi's nine daughters*. Its a film on family planning and once again it'll star newcomers and upcoming starlets like *Madhubala*. If *Nenjodu* is a hit then producers should back people like Basu who can still manage to make a film with little money in these days of rising prices.

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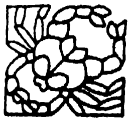
Beginning 22 March
This week the Sun, Venus and Mars are in Pisces, Mercury is in Aquarius, Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto are in Virgo. The Moon will be moving through Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius from Virgo.

ARIES (15 April—14 May) Your domestic affairs will be the source of inspiration and happiness. You will receive letters which will bring good news concerning your career prospects or business. On the whole, this should prove to be a successful week. You might be promoted. Be discreet in both written and spoken word. You are further advised to conserve your energies and resources for the future. **Good dates:** 22, 25 and 26. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.

TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Provided you are discreet and careful on your professional front, this week has a fair measure of success in store for you. Keep your business partners and other associates in good humour. Love and domestic affairs are not well signified. Someone close to you will cause anxiety. You are advised not to make changes in your plans and to avoid getting into disputes with those in authority. **Good dates:** 22, 24 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North.

GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Promotions or transfers are in store for you this week. You may have to undertake a journey which will be the answer to one of your pressing domestic problems. This is a very critical week for businessmen. Medical expenditure is in store for you. The time is particularly favourable for those who belong to the working classes. Avoid disputes and controversies. Look after your health. **Good dates:** 23, 26 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 7. **Favourable direction** :North-west.

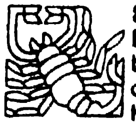


CANCER (15 July—14 August) Relatives will help you in various ways this week. Domestic affairs will keep you quite busy and, as a result, you may not find time to devote to your professional affairs. Love and matrimonial affairs will make steady progress. The death of a distant friend or relative will cause grief. Financially you will be in a spot of trouble. Look after your health. **Good dates:** 24, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:**2, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:**East.

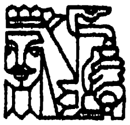
LEO (15 August—14 September) This will be a happier and certainly more eventful week for you. The time will be particularly favourable for love and matrimonial affairs. Social engagements will keep you busy otherwise. Speculative ventures will yield good results. An elderly relative will prove very helpful to you. You are advised to exercise restraint. Check extravagance. **Good dates:** 22, 24 and 26. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:**South.

VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This week will provide you with plenty of opportunities for fun and frolic. You may, however, lose something which has been very precious to you. The time is particularly good for gambling, speculation and love affairs. You will find yourself in a position to repay your debts. Professional affairs will make good progress, despite opposition from seniors or those in authority. **Good dates:** 22, 23 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North-west.

LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Your business will suffer a minor setback in the early part of this week. Otherwise your affairs will make steady progress. New friends and fresh interests will contribute to your happiness. Children will also be the source of joy and comfort. The time is favourable for courtship and marriage. Your health will improve. You are advised to keep up your correspondence with old friends. **Good dates:** 25, 26 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-east.



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A female member of your family may cause anxiety to you. However, womenfolk in general will be of great help to you. Those in authority will also prove helpful. You may gain financially, provided you are discreet. Much of course will depend on your own efforts and initiative. You are advised to look after your health. **Good dates:** 22, 26 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 6. **Favourable direction:** East.



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This promises to be a very successful week for you. Matters of the heart will, however, cause anxiety. Litigations should also be avoided. In moments of crisis, womenfolk will come to your rescue. You might earn a new friend. Relatives will not be very co-operative. You are advised not to mix business with pleasure and to avoid disputes. **Good dates:** 24, 26 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 7. **Favourable direction:** South.

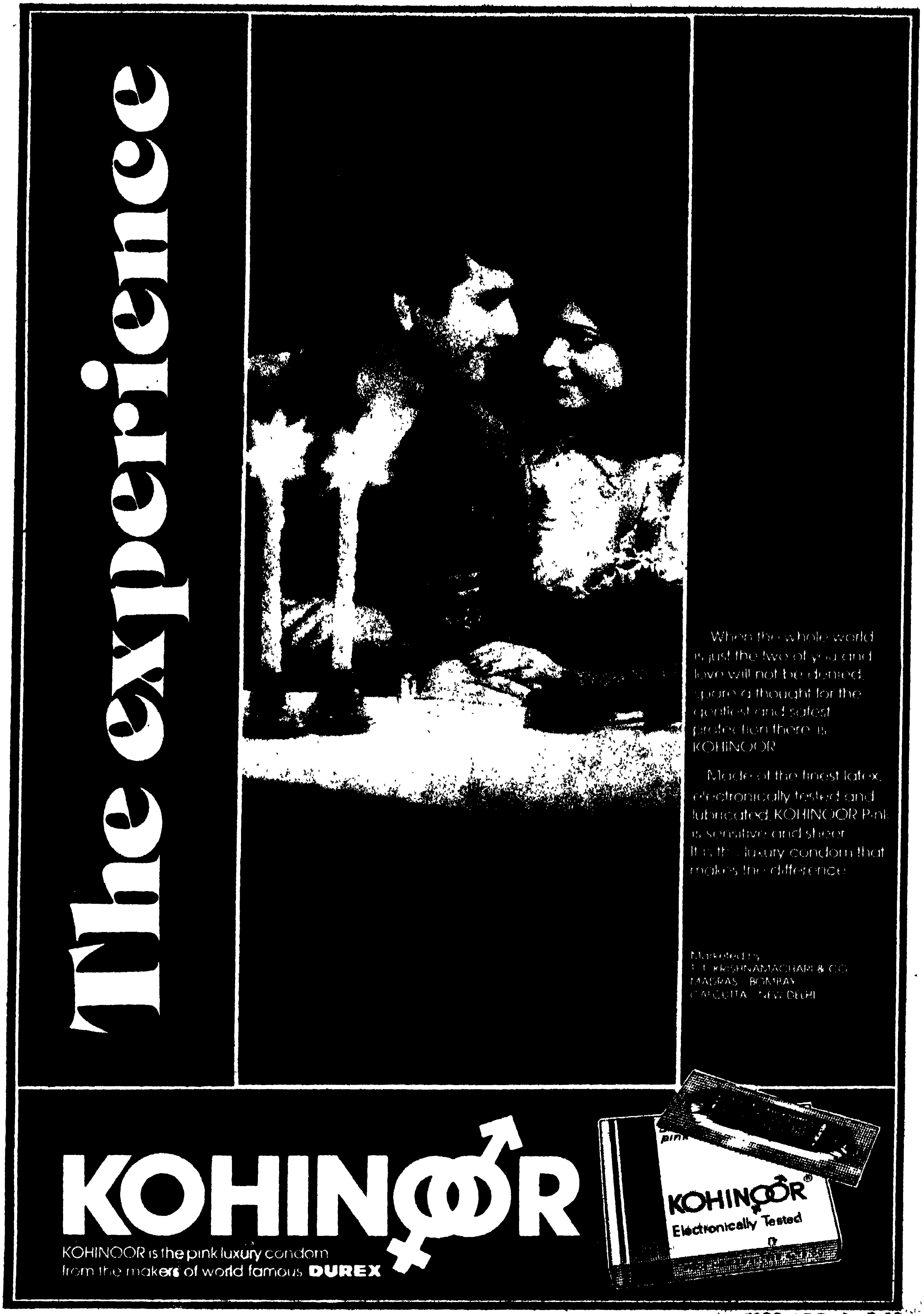
CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Your problems, despite your efforts, will not be solved this week. You are likely to remain perplexed and apprehensive. Your domestic front will also prove disappointing. Any wrong move or decision on your part may prove very costly. You will have to constantly guard against deceit. You will not be in a position to trust or rely on too many people. Do not be despondent. There are better days ahead. **Good dates:** 22, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.

AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Though most of your pressing problems will be solved, you will still find minor obstacles on your path to success this week. You might also face opposition on your professional front. An old person of the opposite sex will cause anxiety to you. However, the time is particularly favourable for love and matrimonial affairs. You are advised not to waste time on questionable pleasures **Good dates:** 23, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.

PISCES (15 March—14 April) You may have to seek alternate means of subsistence this week. This will be due to disappointment with your current assignment. You may not find yourself in a position to depend on friends. Relatives will not be helpful either. In any case, you should not rely too much on others. If you are to make headway, you have to make it on your own steam. Look after your health. **Good dates:** 22, 23 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North.

Political forecast for 1981: Significant changes along with an acute shortage of foodgrains are in store for the USSR. Sino-Soviet relations, however, should improve considerably by the end of this year. No progress is foreseen in US-Soviet relations. Russian foreign policy will create panic in West Asia. India will continue to enjoy Russian patronage. A significant change will be in the attitude of Iran towards the USSR, despite the latter's presence in Afghanistan.

AMRITLAL



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chess

Not every day does one have the opportunity to read a detailed account of a reigning world champion's rise to the summit, which is why the publication of Chess is My Life by Karpov and Roshal (Pergamon, £15; paperback £8·95) is so worthy of discussion.

Although written in the main by Alexander Roshal a well-known Russian chess journalist, 'Chess is My Life' was obviously produced with the close collaboration and cooperation of Karpov himself and most of the notes to the games are his. So there is no doubt that this is an authoritative biography of the world champion.

Originally produced in Russian under the somewhat spurious title of 'The Ninth Vertical', the Pergamon publication is Dr K. P. Neat's excellent English translation which traces Karpov's career from his earliest years up to but not including his world title defence in Baguio 1978. The English version reads very well (possibly even better than the Russian original by all accounts) but somewhere along the line one begins to pick up a feeling of insecurity in the narrative. For although Roshal is at great pains to impress upon the reader's Karpov's great natural abilities and his growing string of successes which rose so naturally to a crescendo in 1975 (when Karpov became world champion), the still greater length to which he goes in attempting to justify the decision by FIDE (the World Chess Federation) to award Karpov the world title, merely suggests that is indeed something there to be justified. (Karpov became champion by default when FIDE rejected Fischer's terms for defending his title.) This feeling is strengthened by the rather hollow way Karpov's only two rivals, Fischer and Korchnoi, are dismissed as raving paranoiacs.

Apparently Fischer was mad because he expected FIDE to accept regulations giving the champion (then Fischer) an unfair advantage. No mention was made of the fact that Karpov subsequently defended his title in Baguio under regulations which protected the champion's title at least as well as those which Fischer had demanded and FIDE rejected. And Korchnoi? Well, everybody knows that Korchnoi is completely crazy. After all, anybody who leaves the Soviet Union must be mad.

On the subject of Korchnoi, it is amusing to compare this book with Korchnoi's own autobiography published some two years ago by B. T. Batsford under the title 'Chess is My Life'. What a coincidence.

But returning to Karpov and Roshal, I do not think the book ultimately does Karpov justice. By overstating Karpov's case and denouncing his rivals Roshal sacrifices much of the credibility which much of the book deserves. Moderation in all things.

Too many sacrifices

White: Donchev. Black: Spassov
Sicilian Defence

1. P—K4, P—QB4; 2. N—KB3, P—Q3; 3. P—Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, N—KB3; 5. N—QB3, P—QR3; 6. B—QB4, P—K3; 7. B—N3, P—QN4; 8. O—O, B—K2; 9. P—B4, O—O; 10. P—K5, P x P; 11. P x P, KN—Q2; 12. B—K3, N x P; 13. Q—R5, QN—Q2; 14. QR—Q1, B—N2; 15. R x P, R x R; 16. N x KP, Q—B1; 17. R x N, Q x R; 18. Q x N, K—R1; 19. Q—R5, QR—KB1; 20. N x R, R x N; 21. P—KR3, P—N5; 22. N—Q5, R—B4; 23. N—N6, Q—B3; 24. Q—N4, B—B4; 25. N—B4, R—B5; 26. Q—N3, R x N; 27. Resigns (27 B x R, B x B+; 28. Q x B, Q x P mate).

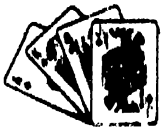
Trouble up the Volga

White: Farago. Black: Knaak
Volga Gambit

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—QB4; 3. P—Q5, P—QN4; 4. P x P, P—QR3; 5. P x P, B x P; 6. N—QB3, P—Q3; 7. N—B3, P—KN3; 8. P—KN3, B—N2; 9. B—R3, QN—Q2; 10. O—O, N—N3; 11. R—K1, O—O; 12. R—N1, B—B5; 13. P—K4, B x RP; 14. N x B, R x N; 15. B—Q2, Q—R1; 16. B—B3, N—R5; 17. B x N, B x B; 18. P—K5, P x P; 19. Q—N3, N x P; 20. R x N, R—R6; 21. Q—N5, R x N; 22. Q x P, P—K3; 23. R—N8, Q—R7; 24. R—N2, P—K5; 25. Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



When a defender leads through dummy's Kx and as declarer you hold Jx, which card do you play from dummy? An article by Jens Boeck in a Danish paper makes a distinction that is seldom formulated, although good players are aware of it. Compare these two deals:

Dealer, South. Love all

♠ 8 6 4 3 2
♥ K 3
♦ K Q 9
♣ A J 4

W		E
♠ K Q J	N	♠ —
♥ Q 10 8 4	W E	♥ A 9 7 6 5
♦ J 5 4	S	♦ 10 8 3 2
♣ 10 8 3		♣ 9 7 6 5

♠ A 10 9 7 5
♥ J 2
♦ A 7 6
♣ K Q 2

South plays in Four Spades and West leads the King of spades, on which East shows out. Declarer will naturally eliminate the clubs and diamonds before exiting with a trump. West will now try a low heart.

Since West was forced to lead a heart or concede a ruff-and-discard, South has no certain indication about the lie of the Queen and Ace. Probably he will do the right thing, because West has already turned up with ♠ K Q J and ♦ J.

On this lay-out there is a strong pointer to the right play:

♠ 7 6 5 4 2
♥ K 3
♦ K Q 9
♣ A J 9

W		E
♠ A K 3	N	♠ —
♥ A 10 8 4	W E	♥ Q 9 7 6 5
♦ J 5 4	S	♦ 10 8 3 2
♣ 10 9 8		♣ 7 6 5 3

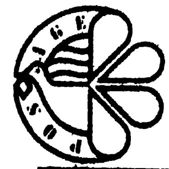
♠ Q J 10 9 8
♥ J 2
♦ A 7 6
♣ K Q 2

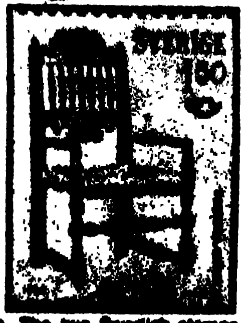
Now West leads ♣ 10 against Four Spades. At some point in the play West, as before, leads a low heart. Now South knows that West was not obliged to touch hearts – he could have exited with a trump – so it is right to play the King from dummy.

The principle to remember is that you must not let a defender diddle you out of a trick you would surely make if you had to play the suit yourself.

TERENCE REESE

stamps





The Scandinavian countries regularly issue series of stamps with a common theme to illustrate their cultural affinities. Nineteenth century handicrafts provide the theme for the 1980 series. The two Swedish stamps feature a wooden rocking cradle of a type made in North Bothnia since the 18th century and (above) a rush-seated armchair made in the province of Scania about 150 years ago. The chair shown on the new stamp was bought a century ago for 2 kronor, about 2s, and is now in the Nordic Museum, Stockholm.

C. W. HILL

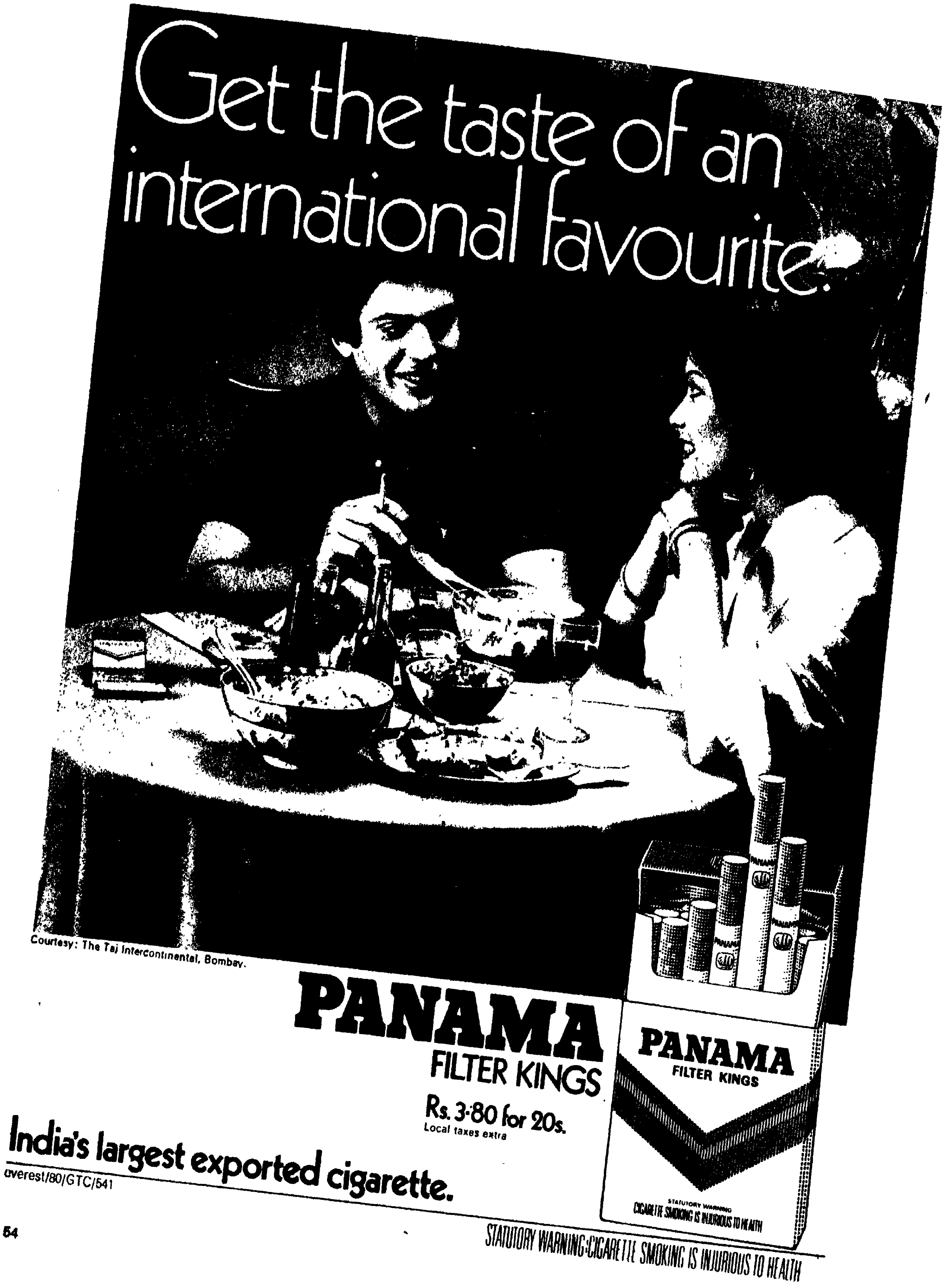
quiz

QUESTIONS

1. When did the Great Leap Forward take place?
2. What is the Knave of Diamonds, other than a playing card?
3. By what pathological term would an individual who over-evaluates his own importance be referred to?
4. What are readymades?
5. Where would one find the Ustacha in the 1930s?
6. What is Skinner's Box?

ANSWERS

1. The Chinese policy of forced industrialisation started in 1958 aiming at an annual rate of industrial growth of over 25%.
2. It is originally the title of an art exhibition organised by the Russian painter Michel Larionov in Moscow in December 1910.
3. He is a megalomaniac.
4. Term adopted by painter Marcel Duchamp to describe his Dada-like use for exhibition of incongruous manufactured objects like urinals in 1917.
5. In Hungary. It was a Fascist-style terrorist organisation of Croat nationalists organised in early 1930s by Ante Pavelic.
6. A device developed by B. F. Skinner for training animals to learn appropriate responses.



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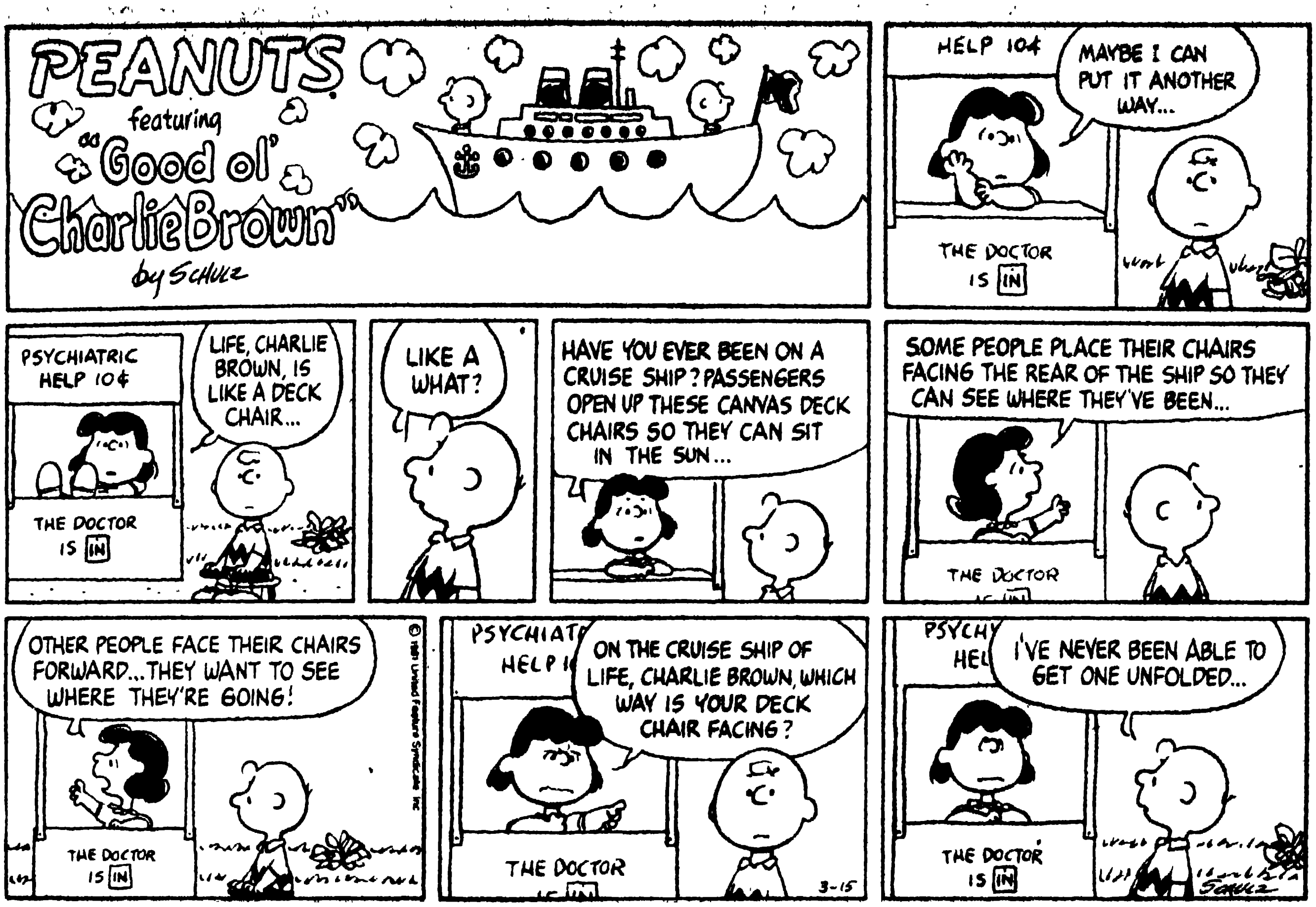
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THE DOCTOR IS IN
LIKE A WHAT?
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON A CRUISE SHIP? PASSENGERS OPEN UP THESE CANVAS DECK CHAIRS SO THEY CAN SIT IN THE SUN...
SOME PEOPLE PLACE THEIR CHAIRS FACING THE REAR OF THE SHIP SO THEY CAN SEE WHERE THEY'VE BEEN...
THE DOCTOR
OTHER PEOPLE FACE THEIR CHAIRS FORWARD...THEY WANT TO SEE WHERE THEY'RE GOING!
THE DOCTOR IS IN
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PSYCHIAT HELP
ON THE CRUISE SHIP OF LIFE, CHARLIE BROWN, WHICH WAY IS YOUR DECK CHAIR FACING?
THE DOCTOR
3-15
PSYCH HEL
I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO GET ONE UNFOLDED...
THE DOCTOR IS IN
SCHULZ

ASIDES

The RSVP syndrome

By V. K. Madhavan Kutty

I have come to the conclusion that one should be careful in sending out invitations. I do get invitations for official and non-official functions occasionally. The only thing I like about them is the inevitable *RSVP, Regrets only.* I invariably regret. How good it is to know that someone wants to invite you and expects *regrets only!* This practice I adopted at international levels, could eliminate a good deal of confusion.

For example, Afghanistan invited the Soviet troops. Had there been the *RSVP, Regrets only,* in that invitation, history would have been different. And the monopoly press would never have got an opportunity to embarrass us about the non-aligned meet. Think of the trouble one oversight on the part of Afghanistan has caused. It has made us send out so many invitations to other countries to come and talk to us so that we could explain the Afghan stand.

A proper invitation, I think, would have solved a lot of other troubles too. One thing, we are misunderstood for somebody else's mistake. We are called partisan. We are called aligned. Pakistan thinks that we are not equidistant from the super powers. All this could have been avoided. Today, at the non-aligned conference and elsewhere in the world forums what are we doing? Trying to convince the rest of the world and some of our people also about the Afghan invitation.

It is time for the non-aligned block to take some clear and convincing stand about sending out invitations among themselves, to other countries and especially to super powers. The invitations that are to be sent by the under-developed, developing and developed countries are to be prescribed. Care should be taken in attaching strings. Some of the countries have modern devices to see strings even if they are not attached. Such invitations should be divided in three categories. Invitations among the non-aligned countries, invitation to those hoping to be natural allies and invitations to super powers.

In all the invitations, the expected period of stay should be stated. The invitee before embarking upon the journey should take an oath that he would abide by the five principles of Panchsheel. Even if some invitations are misinterpreted and accepted they should go back after the expiry of invitations. In case any invitee overstays, and insists that the purpose of the visit is not achieved and he would go on staying till that is achieved the matter should be referred to the Bureau and Bureau should take steps to see that he is packed up and sent out. During this period, the non-aligned block, the more non-aligned among them, should ensure that others should not take advantage to get themselves invited to that country as that would enhance coldwar possibilities.

It would be in the interest of the non-aligned countries to send out invitations to super powers with the words marked, *RSVP, Regrets only.* If they do not regret and still come, necessary precautions are to be taken so that the country that invites should remain nonaligned. If the invitations to super powers are for economic aid, the invitation would read better without the *RSVP, Regrets only.* After all one can't go on regretting all the time.

Note: Initial reactions to my proposal have already started coming in. One Latin American country has suggested that the invitation matter should not be discussed by non-aligned nations. Another African country has suggested that in on invitation RSVP should be mentioned. A neighbouring country has suggested withdrawal of RSVP from all previous invitations to make the movement stronger. These may be taken up at the next Summit.

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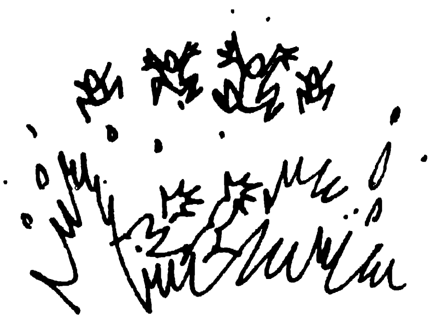


BANGALORE: Dared to do so, the Karnataka chief minister took the plunge literally, to inaugurate a swimming pool. That he dived into the water backward and that there was mighty splash did not go unnoticed by his audience composed mostly of children. Mr T. R. Shamanna, Janata member of the Lok Sabha and his political adversary, who requested Mr Gundu Rao to declare open the Basavangudi Corporation swimming pool challenged him to take the first plunge. The chief minister disappeared into the dressing room, and was back in a trice; attired in a black swimming trunk and splashed in, to the delight of all. Apparently not to be outdone even non-politically, Mr P. Ranadev, Janata member of the Karnataka Assembly followed him into water—*Hindu* (Tarun Rednaur, Visakhapatnam)

NEW DELHI: As a 'security measure,' the Prime Minister's security staff reportedly denied a front row seat to senior CPI leader M. Farooqi, who was to be honoured along with other freedom fighters at the golden jubilee celebration of the Chittagong uprising at Mavlankar Hall on Thursday (19 February). The aged leader, left in disgust as he felt badly treated. The function was marred when a part of the incensed audience shouted in protest. Some raised cries of 'shame, shame.' The Prime Minister who was sitting on the dais was seen pointing towards a security officer to find out the reason. Mr Farooqi had already left the venue by then—*Patriot* (Rashbehari Das, Calcutta)

DORNAKAL: A wireless message sent to the state headquarters by a police constable from here on the basis of a hearsay that 50 persons had died in the collapse of a bridge under construction across Maneru river, five km from here yesterday (24 February), led to great concern resulting in the chief minister hurriedly announcing a judicial probe. Only an hour later when the collector of Warangal district reached the spot could the earlier report be corrected and the chief minister was informed that the toll was only two. Following this, the judicial inquiry was changed into a magisterial inquiry—*Nagpur Times* (N. Ganesan, Bombay)

NEW DELHI: Mr C. M. Stephen, communications minister, likened the ruling Congress-I party to an elephant and the opposition to a donkey. Participating in the debate on motion of thanks to the President for his address to the joint session of Parliament, Mr Stephen said only an elephant could pull a log and not a donkey. In 1977 the donkey was made to pull the log and the result was that the donkey collapsed. Dr Subramaniam Swamy: You are asking for opposition cooperation. But donkey can only kick. Mr Stephen: But our trouble is that the donkey is braying and biting—*Indian Nation* (Om Prakash Dangaich, Bhagalpur)

COIMBATORE: A python has made friends with a hen and they have been living together in cage for months: The python and hen were brought to the Chidambaram Park here by the authorities, following complaints that a snake was being kept in a house in the town. If any other chick was put in the cage the python would swallow it immediately—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* (L. Syamala Rao, Bhubaneswar)

AHMEDABAD: "Reserved" kites were flying all over Ahmedabad. Flying "reserved" kites is latest of the novel agitational methods of the anti-reservationists. And the people responded well, making use of the kites and thread left over after the *utran* on 14 January, which is observed as 'kite-flying day' in Gujarat—*Indian Express* (Veenu Bhatia, Ambarnath)

dia abroad

KUALA LUMPUR: An Indian doctor, whose award of about $ 250,000 for wrongful dismissal by an industrial court was recently quashed by the High Court here, has won the money back again following a further court ruling. The federal court has said that a hospital in Petaling Jaya must pay Dr A. Dutt, its former director of radiology, the money in lieu of reinstatement. Dr Dutt, who worked 12 years at the hospital had his contract terminated in 1976 after disagreement with the hospital authorities. An industrial court awarded him the money after ruling that he had been dismissed without just cause and that reinstatement could not be granted because of the animosity between Dr Dutt and the hospital. The money covered losses of salary and specialists' fees owing to him by the hospital—*Hindu*

without comment

As a result of this (the union) budget, instead of 3 million people crossing over the poverty line, ten million will go under it—Piloo Mody

They (the centre) have to beat us up and put us in jail before removing my government—Jyoti Basu, chief minister of West Bengal

The newspapers are eyes and ears of the public not present in the House—M. Hidayatullah, Rajya Sabha chairman

We are not dead but alive to face any challenge posed by the Congress (I) who not once but twice stabbed me in the back—Sheikh Abdullah

I know it (national interest) is much bigger than Mr (Piloo) Mody—Jaffer Sherief, minister of state for railways

Let there be a caste war. It should settle once for all the issue of 10 per cent people ruling over 90 per cent—Jagjivan Ram on the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat

As 70 per cent you (the farmers) do not have to ask for favours; you have the right to give orders, to dictate—A. B. Vajpayee, BJP leader

After the spectacle that it has made of itself in recent weeks the Congress (U) should in future mean Congress (useless)—Tailpiece in the *Times of India*

We shall continue to sledgehammer your heads until you recognise our rights—Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on his decision to force the Tehran government into recognising Iraq's offshore and territorial claims

In Islam compromise with the enemy has no sense—Ayatollah Khomeini

We are not in an arms race with India, and India should be satisfied with that—Agha Shahi, Pakistan's foreign minister

In many ways, the international situation depends on the policy of the USSR and the USA—President Brezhnev

America's successes will be our successes. Your problems will be our problems, and when you look for friends we will be there—Margaret Thatcher, British PM, to President Reagan

With Prince Charles beside me I cannot go wrong—Lady Diana Spencer in *Time*

stration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

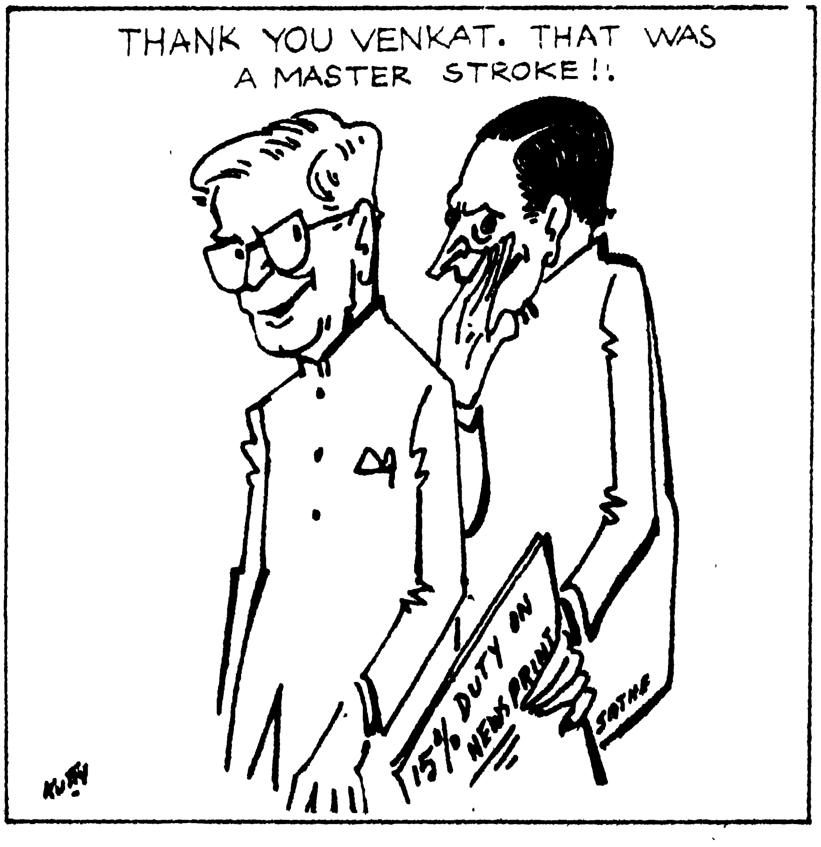
DELHI DIARY

WISE COUNSEL

Did you know that the Indian government hires a public relations consultancy firm for its Washington embassy for a fee of $ 60,000 per year? Well, neither did we, until Syed Shahabuddin asked a question in the Rajya Sabha. As the finance minister's written reply to the question has gone largely unreported, here are the details. The firm calls itself Public Relations Attache International Inc. (PRAI) and has been employed by the Indian embassy since 9 August 1965. Anything significant in that? Well, yes. The firm's chief executive is one J. N. Ganju who was a public relations officer with the Indian information and broadcasting ministry since 1949 and transferred to the Washington embassy in 1959. He joined PRAI in 1965. Now, how big is the team that supports chief executive Ganju? Is it virtually a one-man show set up by a former government employee who decides to strike out on his own and uses to full advantage his contacts with his former colleagues?

Mr Ganju's qualifications—a masters degree in economics and a diploma in journalism—were quite suited for his I & B ministry post but how much ice did he cut in Washington? The minister stated that he was appointed to "achieve continuing American support for India's economic development." After the 1971 Bangladesh war the US government discontinued economic aid to India and direct aid was resumed after President Carter came to power. Was there much for him to do? The embassy itself seems at one stage to have had second thoughts on retaining his services. When his contract expired on 1 September 1979 it tried to find another consultant but failed. PRAI was reappointed on 1 June 1980.

In the last decade Indian exports have faced growing protectionism in the USA and all the advice available in Washington does not seem to have been of much help in fighting this successfully. That PRAI was supposed to provide economic counsel is proved by the fact that its fees are paid out of the finance ministry's budgetary grant The fees paid to PRAI would have been almost enough to pay for the posting of an economic counsellor *and* a first secretary *along with* their families in Washington. The first secretary, presumably from the IFS, would in all probability have been better qualified than Mr Ganju for the job. And the commercial counsellor could have helped out quite a bit. But still PRAI remains indispensable.


THANK YOU VENKAT. THAT WAS A MASTER STROKE !!
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PATRON OF POOR

The Congress(I) MLA from Shahpur in Bihar, Mr Anand Sharma, wants to help the poor. How does he go about it? He decides to construct a *janata* shopping centre at Bihia in his constituency. So he manages to obtain two acres of land from the railways near the Bihia station. But poor people are already living in makeshift houses there. So the services of the Bihar police are requisitioned and the squatterers are severely beaten up and evicted. They are not the same poor for whom Mr Sharma cares so much. This is not all that inexplicable once we realise that Anand Sharma is the brother of A. P. Sharma, union minister for tourism and civil aviation.

THOUGHTFUL P.M

If China can have the "Thoughts of Chairman Mao" distributed all over the country at state expense then why can't India follow the example? Never mind that Chairman Mao's thoughts are currently at a discount in China and those who swallowed them in toto are accused of "whateverism." Ever since Mrs Gandhi returned to power the directorate of advertising and visual publicity has taken up in right earnest the task of propagating the thoughts of Mrs Gandhi. In the past 14 months as many pamphlets of her "thoughts" have been issued, all carrying her same beaming image. But there is one difference with Chairman Mao. His thoughts always came in red but Mrs Gandhi's comes in variable colours. Isn't that symbolic?

PUBLICITY FORMULA

Remember when Morarji Desai suddenly sprang a surprise on everybody by claiming that he had a formula for solving the intractable Assam problem and enjoyed a good bit of the limelight? It now appears that all that he had up his sleeves was the trite suggestion that Bengalis in Assam should learn to live in amity with the Assamese and also pick up their language. When Mrs Gandhi came to know what a damp squib Mr Desai's formula was after his meeting with home minister Giani Zail Singh, she gave him a thorough dressing down. The rather straightforward Giani*ji*, who had already agreed to a second meeting with Mr Desai, had to feign ill health and call it off, although he was fit enough to attend office during that day.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

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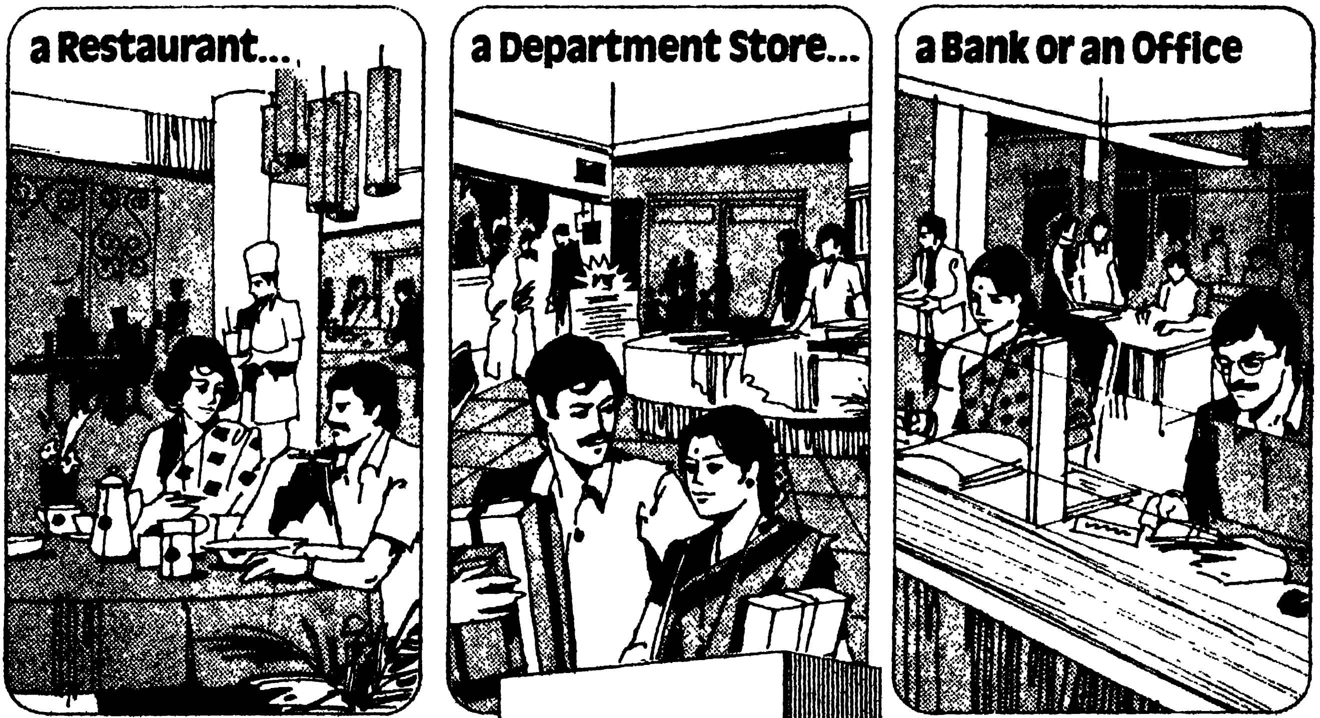
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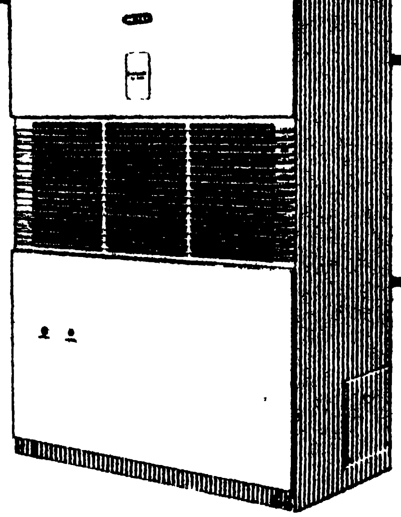

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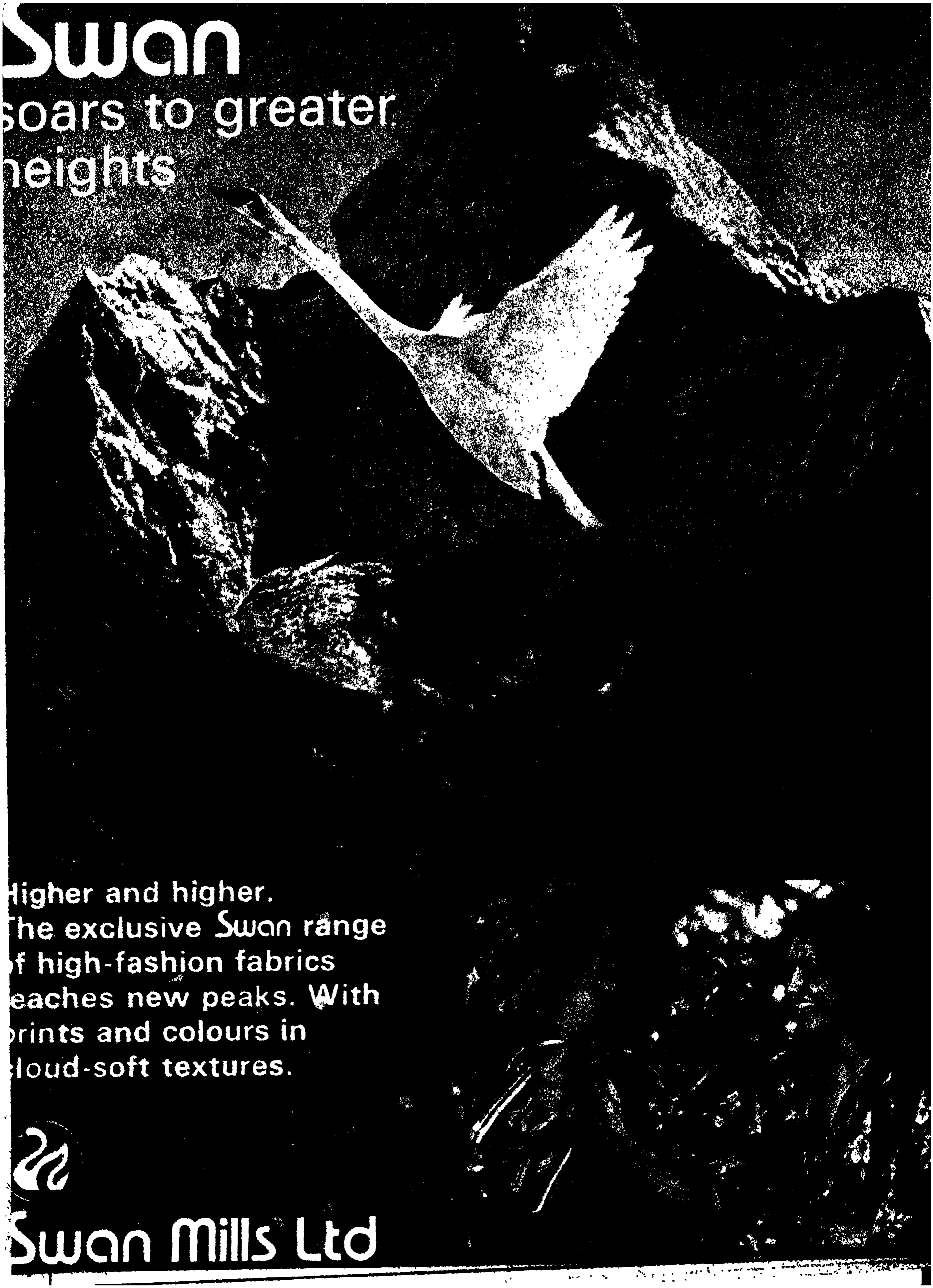

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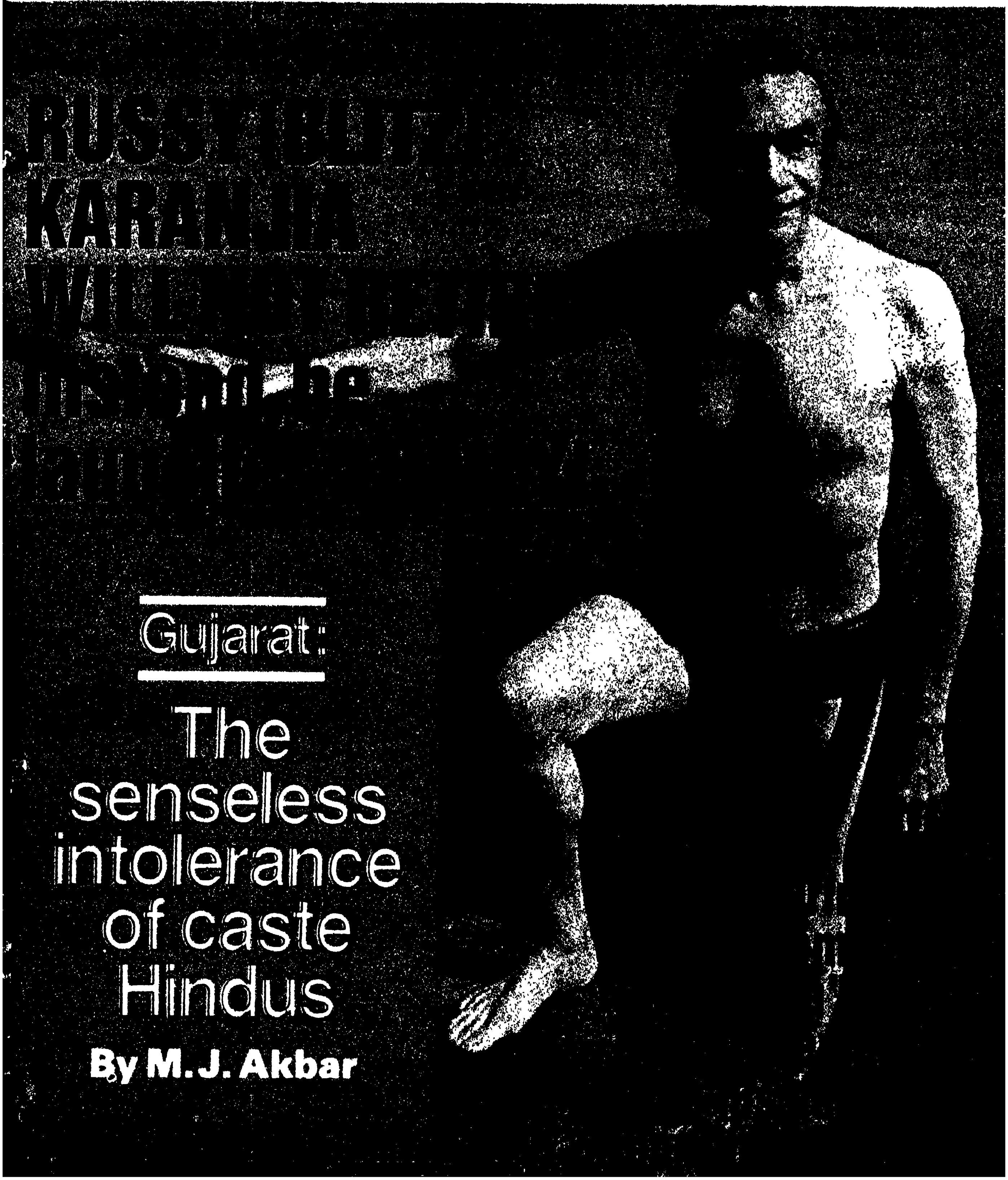

RUSSY BLITZ
KARANJIA
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Gujarat:

The senseless intolerance of caste Hindus

By M.J. Akbar

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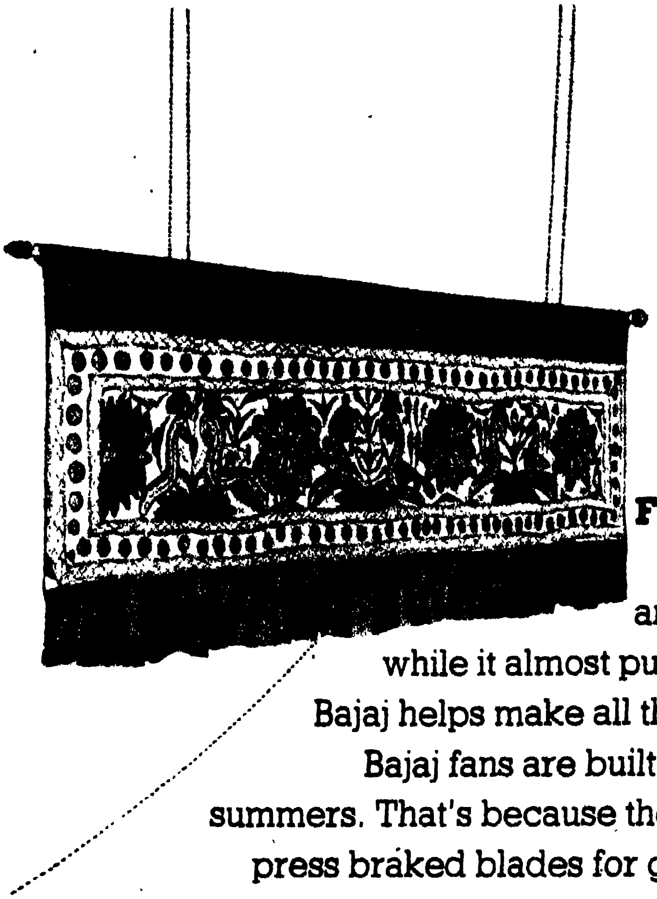

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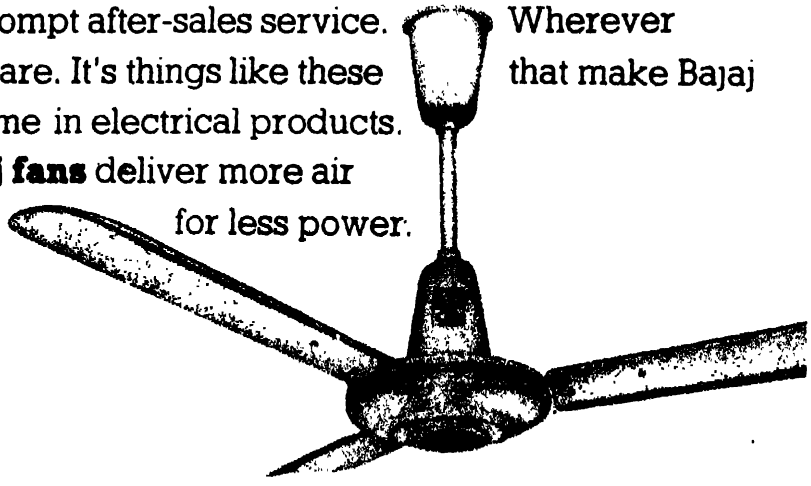

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SUNDAY VOLUME 8
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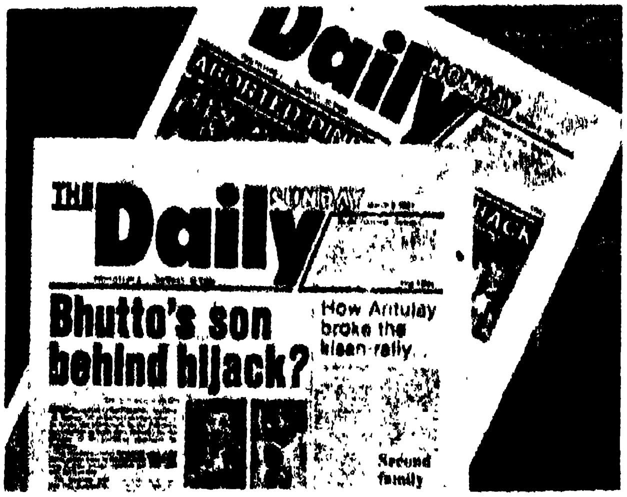
March 22, 1981

The caste war in Gujarat goes on unabated as the caste Hindus seek to turn back the wheels of history through their violent agitation to end reservations for the backwards. The Indian constitution is under challenge as also the last 30 years' attempts to right an injustice rooted in Indian history. M. J. Akbar went to Ahmedabad to find out what were the forces that were fanning the flames of hate. **Page 12**

When the Israelis learn of Col Kadhafi's threat to blow up New York if they do not give up all occupied Arab territories in a day, they decide to destroy Libya. This is the tense scenario for the political novel *The Fifth Horseman* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, whose excerpts we carry. **Page 32**

FEROZE MISTRY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THE Daily
SUNDAY
Bhutto's son behind hijack?
How Antulay broke the kisan rally
Second family

Russy Karanjia, editor of *Blitz*, is a colourful personality who has always believed in controversies and challenge. He has now taken a revolutionary step in Indian journalism by creating for the first time in the country a daily English tabloid, *The Daily*. The media and the readers are waiting to see how the tabloid will shape up. **Page 20**

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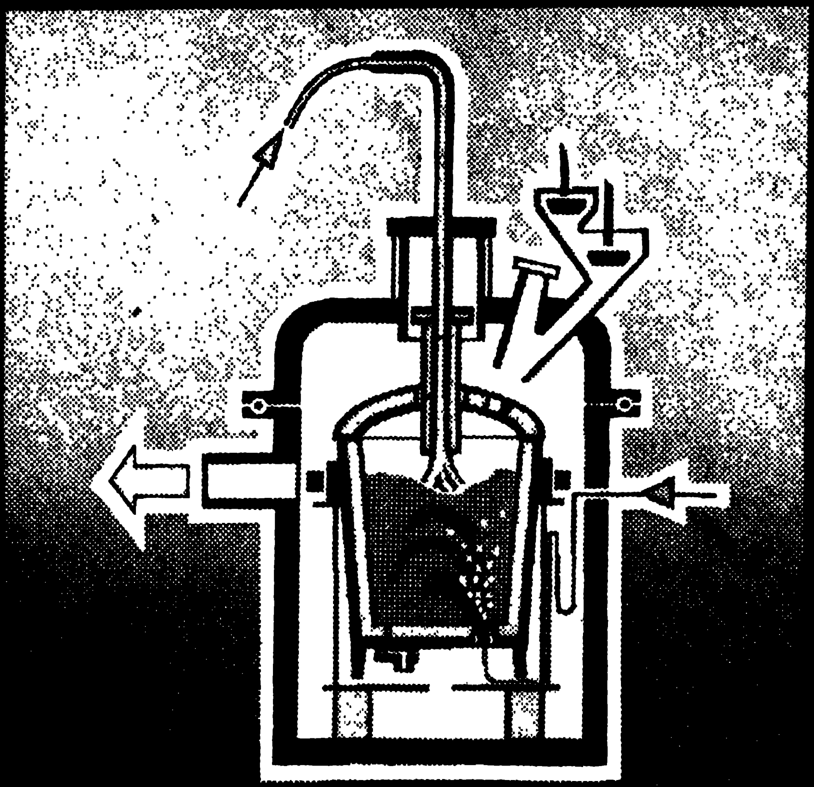

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The Government

A poor PR job

The public row between the World Bank and the Indian government over the Thal Vaishet project could have been avoided had the Indian officials posted in Washington kept a close tab on the situation. If New Delhi had been warned in time of the attitude of the bank officials then remedial action could have been taken to prevent the loan sanction from lapsing. But Indian officials sitting pretty in luxurious Washington kept their home government in the dark. They came to know of the "lapse" only after the World Bank had issued its cryptic statement. The bank did not really want a public row of this sort with its favourite customers. But it was not going to be taken for granted. A little bit of PR work would have settled everything but this our men in Washington failed to do. The bank is already keen to prove that it does not bear India a permanent grudge. It has approved a handsome $ 400 million loan for the other giant fertiliser project, Hazari.

What will paper mills live on?

The directorate-general of technical development(DGTD) in the industries ministry has been indiscriminately licensing capacity for the production of paper and paper boards without locating adequate supplies of raw materials. At this rate, many a unit will come to a grinding halt for want of raw materials after a few years. Forest resources have been dwindling sharply in recent years. Development of forest land is a state subject and unless the centre takes effective steps there may be an even greater paper shortage in the future. Efforts are needed to further broaden the raw material base of the paper industry by using agricultural residues like sugarcane bagasse, jute sticks and waste paper. It is theoretically possible to produce a million tonnes of paper from the sugarcane bagasse now being burnt by the sugar mills. Just to retain the present per capita level of paper consumption of two kg, paper production will have to rise from the present one million tonnes to over two million tonnes in the next 25 years. We must, however, aim at a per capita consumption of at least 4.5 kg by the year 2000 keeping in mind the rise in education, employment and literacy. The central government will have to immediately take matters in hand if this target is to be fulfilled.

Twice lucky

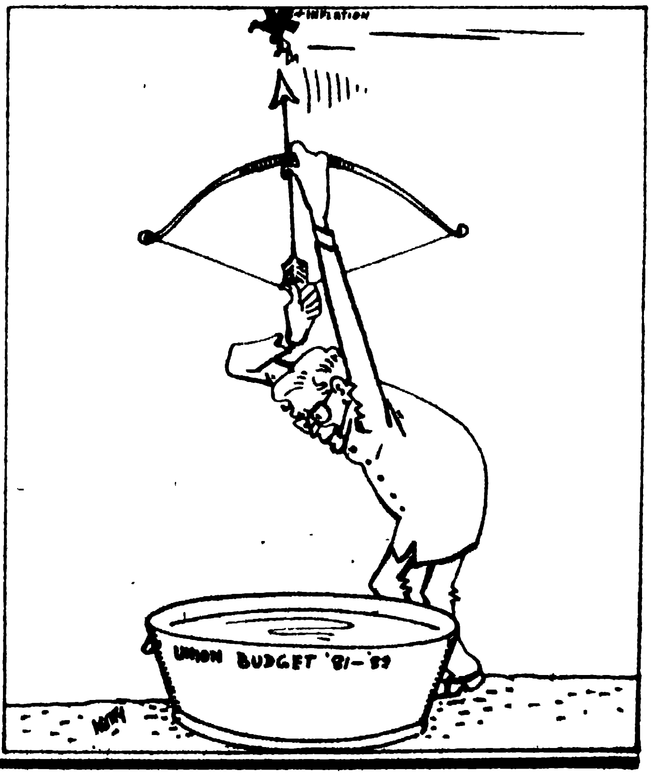
How did railways minister Kedar Pande sail so merrily through both Houses of Parliament while replying to the debate on the railway budget? He mollified his critics in the Lok Sabha by announcing several concessions in the stiff new imposts he had made on both freight and passenger traffic. But he was clever enough to ward off repeated queries about the total impact of these reliefs. Before they could really get at him he rushed off to the Rajya Sabha to reply to the debate there. But the elders knew their job better and Mr Pandey had to come out with how much his concessions would actually amount to. And what an anti-climax it was! Concessions of only Rs three crores had been made on the new measures that would fetch Rs 353 crores annually. But even here Mr Pande was lucky. It was too late in the evening for reporters to pick up this story of virtually non-existent concessions. The railway board members present promised details the next day. But that next day is yet to come.

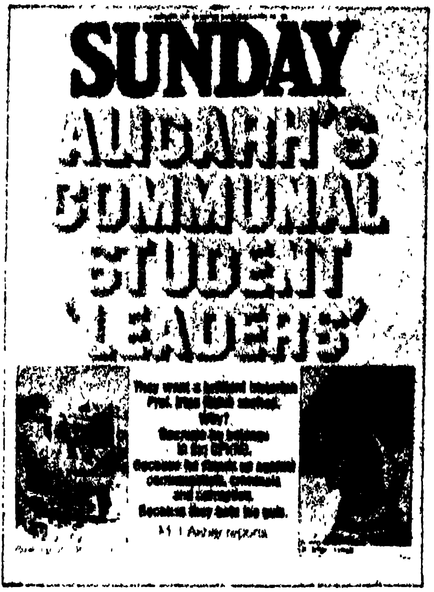
Two masters for export units

The scheme for quick sanctioning of 100 per cent export-oriented units, formulated by the commerce ministry is off to a good start. Altogether 21 applications for such units have been cleared so far. But there is a duality of control over the sanctioning procedure that may lead to problems later. The applications will have to be submitted to the secretariat for industrial approvals which will then forward them to the commerce ministry for clearance by a special board. Thus the industries ministry can easily kill the scheme by either not forwarding deserving applications or forwarding those which have more clout than expertise. This would not have been the case had the whole matter been left in the hands of the commerce ministry but the exceptionally powerful industries secretary managed to retain a hold on the scheme. Currently, units to be set up in the Kandla and Santa Cruz export processing zones are sanctioned by the commerce ministry itself. The matter is referred to the secretariat for industrial approvals only when an industrial licence is necessary.

Free trips for kisans

The railways ran 140 special trains for the kisan rally in Delhi on 16 February and earned Rs 1.5 crores. But they seemed to have conveniently ignored the fact that all these trains were jampacked. Surely the hire charges per train could not have been fixed irrespective of the number of people who would actually travel. If one train carried the load of two then the railways lost by that much. Exceptional overcrowding must have taken its toll on the life of the rolling stock. This large-scale diversion of the railways' resources had its own impact on the services available to regular passengers. The railway board does not seem to have minded all this in the least.





Hero of Aligarh

Aligarh's communal student 'leaders' (1 February) by M. J. Akbar gives a fairly balanced account of what is happening at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). I am not involved in the so-called ideological clash, and can give an unbiased view of the situation: I think that if we want to save AMU from total extinction, we must rally behind persons like Dr Irfan Habib.
Athar Husain, Biochemistry Division, AMU, Aligarh

As a student of AMU, I have felt that anyone can command the students' following in the university by whipping up emotions. The present stock of student leaders is not, perhaps, communal. But their method is the same: their agitation against Dr Habib gained momentum only after they gave a call to "save Islam". In Aligarh all those who claim that Islam's honour is in danger, insult it unfailingly.
Khalid Abu Saleh, Patna

The students have claimed that their agitation is on a large scale. I think the agitation has a limited following; it is not directed against an ideology as a whole, or against an institution, or even against political parties which have played havoc with the university, but, sadly, against an enlightened and reasonable person. The students may succeed in getting rid of Prof. Habib, who is recognised as one of the greatest living historians today; but this would be the greatest defeat for the revivalist organisations instigating the students. Dr Irfan, with his knowledge, would be welcome anywhere, but the loss would be the community's, the university's and the potential student's. Posterity will be told how AMU in 1981 had thrown out Dr Irfan because logic failed to compromise with sentiment; they will be reminded of the crimes perpetrated on enlightened persons in medieval Europe who, similarly, spoke the truth.

The agitation has been started under the garb of defending Islam; this shows that the students have no idea at all of the true Islamic spirit. Islam is being used as a veil for orthodox and reactionary forces directed against reform. Philosophically, Islam stands for socialism and change. The students should not destroy this Islamic spirit by demonstrating against a person whom our community should be proud of. Let me clarify that the Almighty has given us no authority to judge the sincerity of a person, whether or not he accepts the Supreme Force. The agitation also betrays the students' poor academic standards and lack of education. Frankly, it is due to the efforts of Dr Habib that Muslims today can study history without feeling guilty. He shattered the myth that Muslims came to India to convert non-believers and maintain huge harems. Is this no contribution to Islam?
M. Atyab Siddiqui, Delhi

On behalf of the Indian History Congress, I would like to express my gratitude for your extremely informative and courageous article on the recent developments in AMU, exposing the vicious communal campaign against Prof. Irfan Habib, one of India's most eminent and respected historians. Your readers may be interested to know that the Indian History Congress at its 41st session in Bombay in the last week of December, which was attended by more than 1,000 historians, passed a unanimous resolution condemning the attacks on Prof. Habib and calling on the authorities concerned to take energetic measures against such incidents. Far from being able to do so, the vice-chancellor has now seen fit to chargesheet Prof. Habib and has appointed a person whose impartiality is extremely suspect to head the enquiry committee. Such policies threaten all academic, secular and civilised values.
Sumit Sarkar, Secretary, Indian History Congress, New Delhi

The Muslims of India are grateful to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan for the sacrifices he made to establish AMU. But strikes and communal riots were not what he dreamt of. Seeing the present condition of AMU, this Urdu couplet comes to mind: *"Qaum bepar hai Deen bekas hai, Gai Islam ke Kidhar waris" (translated roughly, this means: people have lost their identity; religion is helpless. Where are those who care for Islam?*
Masood Akhtar, Meerut

You have not mentioned one aspect of the trouble: a very senior professor of the history department has been giving moral and material support to students to get rid of Dr Habib. During the pre-Emergency period he was very close to the then union education minister and was aspiring to become the VC. But students and teachers opposed his nomination.
M. Perwez Ahmad, Monghyr

A professor of the AMU history department who is an opportunist and communalist is behind the trouble. He shot into prominence during the Emergency and later developed close links with the erstwhile Jana Sangh, the RSS and Deendayal Upadhyaya Sansthan during the Janata regime. Now he is a champion of Islam. He was an aspirant for the post of VC, but failed to get nominated. So he hired some student leaders to agitate against Dr Irfan Habib and create trouble for the present VC. 'Seniors' in AMU are a menace; they have made the halls their permanent residence and enjoy privileges like free boarding and financial assistance reserved for poor and meritorious students. Because of their interference in admissions, brilliant Muslim students from far-off places fail to get into AMU. I am convinced these forces have the least sympathy for Muslims in general. They even have close links with Hindu communalists with whom they unite to fight the progressive and secular forces in AMU. That is why ABVP-supported candidates could become presidents of the students' union in collusion with the Jamaat.
Razia Sultana (ex-student, AMU), Sambalpur, Orissa

If a student like Manzar Safi has found shelter in the university even after he has been expelled, who is responsible? It is the administrative staff who are always trying to defend him. No doubt Dr Irfan Habib is an eminent historian; he is also a committed politician. His unpopularity among the students is not due to his views but his marxist activities on the campus.
Syed Mohammad Zia, 9, Mumtaz Hostel, Aftab Hall, AMU, Aligarh

I am sure your report will help general students who are not a party to the agitation to see the picture in a clear perspective.
M. Ishrat Alam, Patna

The views expressed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan at different places proves to be an eye-opener to those who always seek an opportunity to divide Hindus and Muslims for their own selfish ends. Every peaceloving and true Indian who swears by socialism and secularism will appreciate your coverage.
M. L. Kamal, Varanasi

I do not think it is students who are agitating against Dr Habib but *goondas* and criminals.
Afroz Shaheen, Patna

The fact that students like Manzar Safi and Javaid Habib justify the military regime of Pakistan shows their fascist bent of mind. These criminal elements are a challenge not only to Dr Habib but all who stand by democracy and secularism.
Rafiq Alam, Bhagalpur

Congratulations to Mr Akbar and Dr Habib. Here is an editor and a professor who have the ability to fight the corrupt, the criminal and the communal.
Priyadhan Nandy, Hooghly

A *pardar* community?

Dr Zakir Husain did not finish his full term as the vice-chancellor of AMU and resigned in 1956. I still very vividly remember his last day in the university as VC. After great persuasion, the students' union people were able to make Zakir Saheb agree to come to the union hall to give a farewell speech. Unfortunately, a student died at night in the university hospital after prolonged affliction from jaundice. Zakir Saheb first went to the hospital in the morning, joined the boy's funeral procession to the church and attended the service. He came to the union hall at the appointed hour in the evening, immaculately dressed, as always, but visibly sad. I still recall every moment of this event and every word of his speech. He opened by saying that it was a sad day and not appropriate for a meeting: *Hamare ek sathi ne aaj hamko alvida kahi hai*" (one of us has bid us goodbye). He went on to make his speech and in the course of it, he narrated a fable.

It is impossible to translate his beautiful Urdu but the story went something like this: In a forest there lived a community of parrots. A *bahelia* (bird-trapper) lived in a nearby village. He used to catch parrots by a novel method. He would put a long string through a number of small pieces of *narkul* (hollow twig) and tie it from one tree to another. The parrots would perch on these *narkul* pieces. Since the pieces were hollow and loose, the parrots would lose balance and keep going round and round until the *bahelia* came and caught them. After a long time, when many parrots had been fooled by the *bahelia*'s ingenuity, a reformer was born into this community. He established a school. He taught the parrots: *"Hum par dar janwar hain. Hum shikari ke narkul par kabhi naheen baithainge. Aur agar baith bhi gaye to par pharphara kar ur jayainge"* (We are feathered animals. We shall never perch on the poacher's string. And even if we do, we shall fly away...for we are feathered animals.)

When every single parrot, young and old, had learnt the lesson by heart, the reformer left the forest and went elsewhere, satisfied that he had finally beaten the *bahelia*. After a few months, the reformer happened to pass through the forest and thought he would visit the parrot community and see how they were doing. He found that the *bahelia* had stretched his string as before. A whole lot of parrots were perched on the *narkul* pieces, going round and round, without letting go. The only change was that they kept chanting *"Hum par dar janwar hain. Hum shikari ke narkul par kabhi naheen baithainge. Aur agar baith bhi gaye to par pharphara kar ur jayainge."*

Indian Muslims are *pardar* animals. Sir Syed was the reformer. He established AMU. No further comments are needed.

Zamir Ansari, New Delhi

Corruption, malfunctioning: Is AMU any exception?

Undoubtedly, Prof. Irfan Habib is a learned man, but his views are only partly correct. Besides, one should not wash one's dirty linen in public. Corruption and malfunctioning have been prevailing in all Indian universities; AMU is no exception. Prof. Habib holds powerful posts. He is dean, faculty of social sciences, as well as a member of the executive council—the university's highest body. So, he should have tried to set things right instead of expressing his views in the *Indian Express*, which has been trying to tarnish the image of AMU for several years. After the arrival of Syed Hamid as VC, criminal activities were checked considerably. All students with criminal records were rusticated. So, it is very wrong to say that criminals are receiving shelter in the AMU campus.

Students who did not agree with Prof.Habib's idelogy have been refused admission in the research section. Prof. Habib has been exploiting the non-teaching employees for several years. It was on his instructions that the employees staged a *dharna* and struck work a few years ago, for the first time in AMU's history.

The agitation started by AMU leaders originally, did not get much support among the students. It was only when the district magistrate came to the VC's lodge and threatened the leaders with dire consequences that students at large began rallying behind them. As far as discipline and academic standards are concerned, they are very disciplined and their academic calibre is comparable to that of students in any other university.

Dr M. Nasim-e-Sehar, House Surgeon, Department of Orthopaedics, J. N. Medical College, Aligarh

Prof. Habib's statement in the *Indian Express*, New Delhi, of 13 January does not sustain your theory of a communal student leadership. In his interview, he refers to a "misrule of criminals." He would like everyone in the university administration to fully realise his responsibilities, and not allow himself to be a victim of circumstances. I assure you, Mr Syed Hamid, the VC, and his team are fully capable of taking care of the university. You seem to suggest that peace in AMU is only attainable by the display of armed force, as shown in the photographs.

Mohd. Asif Ali Khan, 23C Medical Colony, AMU, Aligarh

Your report is far from the truth. I was shocked to read it.

S. A. Saghir, Giridih, Bihar

If AMU is in such a bad state as you have found it in, could you please name a single faultless university in our country? Speaking from experience in some other universities, I dare say AMU is one place where girls receive respect from boys. AMU has a distinct culture which other universities miserably lack.

Razia Ashraf, Kanpur

The statement about the lack of theatrical activity in AMU is not a fact. In reality, the AMU drama club has been working efficiently and uninterruptedly since its inception. (Miss Zaheda Zaidi's attempt, note, had been a personal venture of her own.) It has helped to promote theatrical activities on the campus, so much so that the drama club has had to start an annual drama festival since 1968. Being competitive, the festival began to grow with more items and more teams (not less than 15 at any time) taking part in it. Last year Miss Zaidi herself was one of the judges. Besides, the drama club has been taking part regularly in drama competitions organised by the Allahabad Natya Sangh, Punjab university, Allahabad university and Benares Hindu University. The last one deserves special mention, as the departure of the AMU team for the Kashi Yatra '81 coincided with the students' agitation on the campus. The AMU students' union and the authorities encouraged us to go to BHU so that relations between the two universities could be improved. The team consisted of ten boys, four girls and this is the case every time a drama club team goes out. Most of the plays staged here are mixed. The women's college too stages its own performances almost every month and actively participates in the annual drama festival. To further refute the allegation that there is no place for girls on the Aligarh stage, I would like to mention my own appointment as secretary of the drama club—the highest controlling body for promotion of cultural activities on the campus. Also, since 1977 the post of president of the AMU drama club has been held by a non-Muslim, Dr G.D. Bhattacharya, the film, radio and theatre personality, and media consultant to the UN. This is enough to prove that AMU is basically a non-communal institution.

Saba Naheed, Secretary, AMU Drama Club, Room No. 5, G.E.C. Kennedy House, AMU, Aligarh 202 001

If there is so much communalism, crime and corruption in AMU, how do the students compete so successfully in the IAS, and PCS examinations? There were no defamatory articles when students of BHU manhandled their VC and a dean on Republic Day.

S. A. A. Alvi, Medical Road, Dodhpur, Aligarh

Could anyone please show how a university's standards can be raised by talking to a national daily? Your analysis is partial, prejudiced and lacks evidence.

Syed Sayeeduddin, Vice-President, Aligarh Management Association, Department of Business Administration, AMU, Aligarh 202 001

Since when has opposition to marxist views become communal activity ? How could a few slogans painted on the walls of AMU lead Mr Akbar to dub all Aligarh students communalists? Also, Prof. Habib has never been opposed in AMU for his marxist views; he is unpopular among the students for his political activities on the campus.

Ishtiaq Ali, President, Journalism Society, AMU, Aligarh

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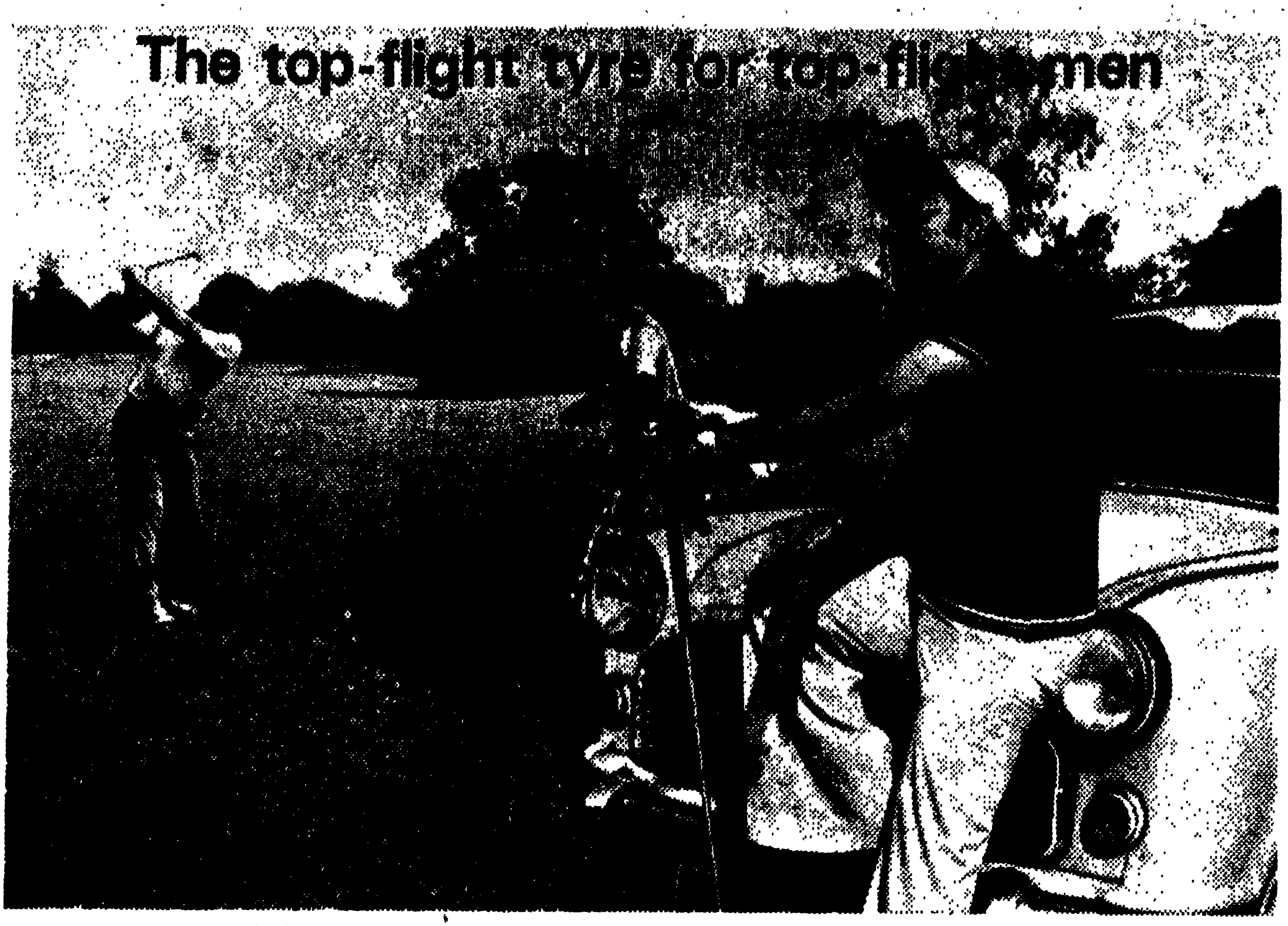

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RSS' misdeeds

It astounded me to read about the RSS as a force to reckon with in Tellicherry (*RSS vs CPM*, 1 February). The onesidedness of the report is clear from the insinuations made regarding the alleged bomb blast at the CPI(M) headquarters in Tellicherry. The RSS men might have managed to put a dynamite in one of the old, dilapidated rooms on the upper storey of the building; there are many such rooms in the building. The CPI(M) office functions in one of these. The bomb might have been burst by operating some device from outside. The blast occurred at two am, when all vehicular traffic was off the roads and the town was asleep. To say that a bloody incident was averted by sheer luck because not a single marxist worker was in the office is pointless; the question of any marxist worker being in the office at the hour does not arise.

The spate of political murders in Tellicherry in 1980 can be traced back to the lockout of Mangalore Ganesh Beedi in 1968, and the shifting of the company to Mangalore consequently. When the *bidi* workers, a large chunk of them being marxists, fought for their demands, the RSS men stood for the company-owners' interests and tried to defeat the agitation. As a result, an RSS activist died. Later in December 1970, the RSS hatched a plot to incite communal hatred in Tellicherry, which has a significant Muslim population. In the communal riots that ensued, U. K. Kunhiraman, a marxist leader, was hacked to death by RSS men. Mr Kunhiraman and his colleagues tried to save a mosque which RSS workers were attacking. During the massive attack on *bidi* workers in 1979, RSS men from Mysore, Mangalore, Calicut and Wynad were deployed at Tellicherry. The sole RSS worker killed in the violence at Patiam, Tellicherry, hailed from Wynad and was reportedly a muscleman of a plantation tycoon there. The RSS has no roots in the social life of Kerala. The statement that there has been large-scale defection from the CPI(M) to the RSS is a figment of the imagination. If at all the RSS enjoys support, it is from the business community, anti-socials and Hindu fanatics.

Sukumaran Kunhery, Tellicherry

Tough, did you say?

Mrs Gandhi gets tough (1 February) by Barun Sengupta betrays a slight misreading of the political situation as also a pronounced bias towards Mrs Gandhi. First, the notion that "her (Mrs Gandhi's) solid supporters were the poor people of the country" is proved wrong by the injustices against poor people in villages: even today they keep away or are forcibly kept away from polling booths so that they cannot vote. Second, the country's voters are, more or less, compartmentalised, with seven to ten per cent of floating votes which really tilt the balance. Mrs Gandhi can hardly hope to win against a united opposition. Third, Mrs Gandhi believes more in gimmicks than in well-thought-out programmes. (It is another matter that she has a very good sense of timing to make these gimmicks appear serious.) From bank nationalisation to the LIC ordinance, the emphasis has been more on propaganda than real good. Fourth, the fact that Mrs Gandhi is getting tough with the middle-class worker must be viewed in relation with two factors: her issuance of black money bonds and the fact that the income of the house of Birlas is equivalent to that of 11 crores of people. Fifth, Mrs Gandhi and other politicians can never take firm action to control prices, for obvious reasons.

Mrs Gandhi is at best Razia Sultana and Putli Bai rolled into one. Razia entices with her attractive slogans and Putli Bai kicks out when the need arises; where Razia fails, Putli Bai succeeds.

Ashok Kumar Singh, Calcutta

There is no denying that Mrs Gandhi should come down heavily to set things right. For that matter, any person in her position would not, and should not, remain a silent spectator to what is happening today. But the panacea Mr Sengupta holds out, i. e., "ensure rapid economic progress, take away some of the privileges enjoyed by the rich and middle-class..." is contradicted by what he says in the very next sentence: "She is not expected to hit everyone simultaneously." Besides, why is Mr Sengupta silent about the other sections of society—smugglers, blackmarketeers etc? Or does he think the middle-class are the only troublemakers?

R. P. Sarathy, Madras

A post mortem

So even some letters addressed to our communications minister Mr C. M. Stephen have been delivered to the wrong person (*Delhi Diary*, 1 February). Our PM is on record as having called our telephone system "rotten." According to replies given to MPs' queries in Parliament, the postal department has other dubious distinctions: the payments on forged money orders and fraudulent withdrawal of a few lakhs of rupees from post office savings accounts, especially in Varanasi district. (Lok Sabha Question 419, Dt 7-7-80). After 33 years, should we call these blessings of *swaraj*?

V. L. Narayana, Howrah

Loksakti and *rajsakti*

That (*Shourie's analysis*, 2 November) "the fate of the Janata government was sealed when JP and Acharya Kripalani decided to make Morarji Desai the first Janata PM" is unquestionable. But was this not the logical conclusion to JP's idea that *loksakti* can control *rajsakti* even by keeping itself outside the purview of *rajsakti*? JP had a very strong personality; the "big three" who fought among themselves for power are, no doubt, pygmies in comparison. But whether JP himself was inherently capable of guiding the youth-force is debatable.

Ashim Kumar Chakraborty, Gaya

The guilty party

It is not Manmad Pappan (*The south's arrack scandal*, 1 February) who is the industrialist-cum-estate-owner-cum-*akbari* contractor but Manarkad Pappan. Arthur Pais, surprisingly, did not mention Pappan's strong political leanings: he is an active Congress(I) member and even contested, and won, the last Kerala Assembly election from Udambancholai. Mr Pais should have also mentioned that it was the official CPI(M) organ *Deshabhimani* which first brought the shocking details of the story to light; that it was only at the intervention of Kerala excise minister that the two lorries, each carrying 12,000 litres of rectified spirit, were intercepted at Trichur; that the present LDF government is the first to have arrested a number of quite powerful and influential *akbari* contractors and registered cases against them prior to ordering a police enquiry. Simply because one person in the excise minister's personal staff happens to be related to one of the accused in the scandal, it is not ethical to involve the minister in the scandal. This is mischievous propaganda aimed at pulling down the LDF government.

D. Rajan, New Delhi

Incredible feat

Unfortunately, I have had no opportunity to read Samaresh Bose before. As such I would not know if he was actually eligible to get the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1980. The mastery he demonstrates (*The tantrik quest*, 25 January-1 February) in describing the movement of a flaccid penis from a position nearly touching the ground to the right, left, upwards, downwards and then circling it in the air, has made me believe that greatness has not been thrust on him; he was born a genius and may win yet another award for his incredulous quest.

Khalilur Rahman 'Zakhmi', Officer, Rupali Bank, Zonal Office, 2 Sir Iqbal Road, Khulna, Bangladesh

Facing facts in Iran

Perhaps for the first time any Iranian leader spoke in a comparatively soft tone (*We believe in Jehad*, 1 February). This is definite proof that these once-fanatical personalities are slowly coming to terms with reality. Previously, they would find fault with everyone, save themselves. One cannot criticise all others while calling oneself "good"—at least not for long.

Snehasish Ray, Puri

Last letter

[illegible]

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COVER STORY

Gujarat:

The senseless intolerance of caste Hindus

If the agitation by anti-reservationists in Gujarat was merely a matter of ironing certain minor anomalies in the reservation policy, it could have had some merit. But just beneath the cloak of sophisticated argument lies the truth : that this is a brutal caste war launched by the privileged against the harijans. The students original demands have, in fact, been conceded by the government, but they are still continuing this agitation because they want to make every city and every village in Gujarat—and perhaps in India—into a battleground where the rich, privileged upper castes will use both the weapons at their command, the violent arsenal and the smooth tongue, to once again destroy the harijans, in whom the first embers of self-respect are beginning to burn. In the villages of Gujarat, where the agitation has spread (making it so much more dangerous), the upper caste Patels openly say that if the harijans begin to behave as equals, who will be the slave labourer? M. J. AKBAR went into rural Gujarat to bring back this report of an intolerant and cruel agitation

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Sabarmati, July 1917
Disbanded: 1.8.1933

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Observances: Truth, Non-violence or Love, Chastity (Brahmacharya), Control of the Palate, Non-stealing, Non-possession or poverty, Swadeshi, Fearlessness, Removal of untouchability, Equality of religions, Physical labour.

Principle IX: Removal of untouchability. Untouchability, which has taken such deep root in Hinduism, is altogether irreligious. Its removal has therefore been treated as an independent principle. The so called untouchables have equal place in the ashram with other castes.

JETALPUR

For nine nights every year, Gujaratis surrender to a beautiful tradition, of song and dance and worship. Young men and women gather in circles, linked together by sound and movement and joy, swaying to a beat that has occupied a place in the Gujarati heart for as long as anyone can remember. *Navratri* is the festival of Gujarat; and *garba* is the highlight.

Jetalpur is a prosperous, Patel-dominated rural town a little more than half an hour's drive away from Ahmedabad. It does not look like a conventional mud-and-bamboo village, since most of the houses are *pucca* stone and cement structures, quite often rising to three or four floors. But the pattern of living is less than cosmopolitan, and that perhaps defines it as rural India more than the sight of magnificently horned livestock munching hay with serene confidence, or the bare land stretching out from the edges of habitation, waiting for the farmer to sow and reap. The main communities live in separate areas of Jetalpur: the 500 plus Patel houses are in one contiguous area; the 150 *darbara* or *thakur* houses in another. And of course, the more than 100 houses of harijans are completely separate, on the rough edge: while there may be a little overlap among the caste Hindu houses, there is absolutely no question of any overlap with harijans.

It is when you enter the harijan area also that you realise that Jetalpur is more a village than a small town. Here is suddenly the world of mud huts and hunger; this is a world apart, struggling to find some sustenance—hopefully, in the year of the lord 1981, outside the grip of the landowner and the moneylender. The harijan youth must make his narrow way from the bus stop on the highway, or from work on someone else's field, back to his world behind the curtain of contempt. There is a large, brightly coloured temple near the main entrance of

ANUBHAI. COURTESY: SANDESH

Furniture of a bank set on fire by arsonists during the Ahmedabad bandh *on 6 February*

Jetalpur, but no harijan has ever been allowed to enter it. Neither may the harijan display any hint of equality before man; his eyes must not challenge the eyes of the upper caste. No young harijan man can even go to the barber of Jetalpur to get his hair cut, because the barber cuts the hair of Patels, and he will not pollute his metal instruments by the touch of a harijan: in any case, isn't the barber himself a superior caste, so why should he touch the harijan whom even the gods, generally known for magnanimity, have condemned to slavery?

In Jetalpur lived a 24-year-old man called Sakrabhai. He was a bit of a vagabond, sleeping often in the fields, living largely through the grace of a *darbara* family which gave him odd jobs to do. Sakrabhai's passion was singing, and he fancied his voice; he was not too bad actually. Sakrabhai wanted to sing anywhere he could, but normally his only audience would be the sleeping birds. But last year, during *Navratri*, Sakrabhai announced that he would sing at the *garba*—during the festival song and dance and laughter.

A festival for everyone, except harijans. They had no right to sing and dance and laugh during *Navratri*. And Sakrabhai was a harijan. When he tried to sing at the *garba*, he was challenging the past and threatening to begin a different future. There could only be one answer to that: a severe thrashing. He was saved only by the intervention of the caste Hindu family which used to help him. But Sakrabhai had committed a sin which could not really be forgiven—because if it was forgiven then society would not remain the same again, every day one more slave might begin to assert himself...

Between the harijan section and the rest of the village, stands a small church in Jetalpur: four walls and a roof and a cross on the door, built in 1974 by the R.C. Mission. They ran a school here too, for 30 years, and this was the school that harijan children could go to because the missionaries would not allow any discrimination. But then a secular, and presumably socialist also, school was started by the government, and every child now goes to that school, whether caste Hindu or harijan—the difference now being that the harijan child is the object of insult and injury and harassment. There are eight Christian families in Jetalpur today, all originally harijans, but non-christian harijans come to the church too sometimes—for the simple reason that this is the only house of God which will allow them entry: the vast Swami Narayan Mandir has no place for Gandhiji's children of God. So, to the church come those harijans in need of solace from a God who has some strange ways of treating his beloved creations.

A poor man's Christmas is not very festive; it cannot be much more than a candle and some bread. It is not noticed by anyone. And it did not interest anyone in particular in Jetalpur; nor was the night of Christmas chosen by the Patels for any symbolic reason. But it was during the night of Christmas—a festival of brotherhood and equality—that a group of Patel boys (all named in a FIR lodged with the police) decided to take their revenge upon that "upstart" called Sakrabhai. Sakrabhai's cousin, Ramanbhai, was sleeping when in the middle of the night four Patel boys of the village woke him up to ask if they could search for their buffalo. Around 1.30 at night, about ten Patel boys came and began searching the harijan areas for this elusive buffalo, which they claimed had been stolen by Sakrabhai. Then they went away. Ramanbhai woke up the next morning, and around seven what should he see but that Sakrabhai had been caught by the Patel boys, and they were dragging him along and beating him: he cried loudly, he wailed for help—but it takes too much courage in rural India to get up and stop a harijan boy from being beaten up by caste Hindus. No one got up to help Sakrabhai. Not even Ramanbhai, who was convinced that Sakrabhai's right leg had already been broken; Sakrabhai was shouting, screaming in pain and terror.

It was seven thirty when the Patel boys managed to drag Sakrabhai into a room in the *panchayat parishad*. All that Ramanbhai had managed to do was follow, along with a few others; they stopped outside the *panchayat parishad* house. The Patel boys locked the doors of the *parishad*. Then they poured kerosene on this young man called Sakrabhai and burnt him to death. People had, by now gathered

Origins of caste

The Indian caste system is not the creation of any particular individual or group, like the Brahmanas, who have stood to gain the most from it. The four-fold division of society was prevelant among the Parsis and the Aryans came to India divided into *gotras* or clans. Aryan society was divided into three groups. The Brahmana-Kshatriya division was along functional lines, one supervised worship and the other fought. The Vaisyas were the residual Aryans who could not be categorised into either of the first two. That took care of the Aryans and the Sudras came to represent the non-Aryans. While the Aryans were nomadic, marriage between their three groups was freely permitted. But as they settleed down among non-Aryans, a taboo slowly developed against inter-racial marriage with the latter. This eventually led to rigidity in definition and exclusivity among the three Aryan groups.

By the time Manu codified social norms and religious practices, the rigidity of the caste system was not only established but also given religious sanction. The duties of the various castes were thereafter set out in great detail by Kautilya in his *Arthashastra*. He enumerated the duties of the Brahmana as (1)*adhyayana* (study), (2) *adhyapana* (teaching), (3) *yajana* (worship), 4) *yajana* (officiating at worship), (5) *dana* (making gifts) and (6) *pratigraha* (accepting gifts). The duties of the Kshatriya comprised (1) *adhyayana*, (2) *yajana*,(3) *dana*, (4) *sastrajiva* (taking up arms as a source of livelihood) and (5) *bhutarakshana* (protection of living beings). The duties of the Vaisya are (1) *adhyayana*, (2)*yajana*,(3) *dana*, (4) *krishi* (agriculture), (5) *pasupalya* (cattle-rearing) and (6) *vanijya* (trade). The functions assigned to the Sudra are (1) *dvijatisusrusha* (menial service of the three twice-born castes), (2) *varta* (production of wealth), (3) *karukarma* (art) and (4) *Kusilavakarma* (crafts).Thus the three higher castes had the common duties of study, worship and making gifts.

These ideas are more or less stereotyped in the *Dharma-sastras*, which reflect the spirit of Vedic literature in all respects, especially in assigning the highest status and dignity to the Brahmanas. In *Manusamhita*, for example, supremacy in every respect is claimed for a Brahmana, though emphasis is also laid on the superior knowledge and qualifications on which that status rests. He must be well versed in his grasp of the Absolute or Brahma (*Brahma-dharana)* and his observance of vows (*niyama-dharana*) and must cultivate universal love. He filled the highest offices of state and society by his character—those of teacher, priest, judge, prime minister, assessor and member of the *Dharma Parishad*, the standing legal commission in the administration. He was punishable in law, but not by capital punishment.

As regards the Sudra, "service was his portion in life." He was not eligible for sacraments (*Samskaras*), nor for hearing sacred texts except their substance. But he was not denied the rites of marriage, cooking of daily food in the *grihya* fires, and funeral ceremonies (*sraddha*). Manu even mentions Sudra teachers and pupils, showing that the Sudra was not denied the right to learning. As representing, however, the lowest level of culture, "a Sudra majority in a country" (*Sudra-bhuyishtham*), it was believed, "would spell its doom."

On the whole the lot of a Sudra was an unenviable one. The formidable array of regulations in the *Manu-smriti* against the Sudra would make dismal reading. He had few privileges and many obligations. The discriminating laws against him and his social disabilities, uttered with brutal frankness, were an inheritance of the past. But Manu treats him exactly like a slave and prescribes barbarous punishments. It was laid down that a Brahmana had to perform the same penance for killing a Sudra as for killing a cat, a frog, a dog, or a crow!

How rigidly were these regulations practised? The Jataka stories describe how the Chandalas were treated as despised outcastes doomed to live outside the city or village, and their very sight was regarded as impure. On one occasion two of them approached the city gate to sell their wares, where two girls of aristocratic birth chanced to meet them on their way to a festival. They regarded it as a bad omen and returned after washing their eyes with perfumed water. The crowd, angry that a gathering where they would have been served free food and drink was disbanded, mercilessly belaboured the two Chandals. Subsequently, concealing their birth, they went to Taxila for study. One of them made good progress but, eventually, their identity was discovered and they were again beaten and driven out. They then went out into the woods, took up an ascetic life, and died soon. This story signals the beginning of untouchability. But as yet the Sudras were not included in this category.

The harijans of Dhetroj who have taken shelter in a nearby village

Like the *Dharma-sutras*,the *Smritis* also sanction intermarriage between males of higher and females of lower castes (i. e. *Anuloma*), but not vice versa (*Pratiloma*). Though Manu clearly supports the marriage of a Brahmana male with a Sudra female, this is expressly condemned in the rules that immediately follow. Such contradictions , which also occur in the *Mahabharata* and *Dharma-sutras*, prove that the practice was looked upon with disfavour and was gradually disappearing.

As regards interdining, Manu lays down that a Brahmana must not eat cooked food (given) by a Sudra who performs no *sraddhas*. This, by implication, shows that food cooked by a Sudra was not absolutely prohibited. But elsewhere in Manu, such food is both permitted and forbidden. Similar contradictions are also found in the *Dharma-sutras*. Manu gives a long list of persons receiving food from whom is forbidden but the restriction is based on considerations of personal virtues not caste. On the whole the idea of untouchability or impurity, even of the Sudras as a caste, was gradually growing, but had not yet become a rigid law or practice. No definite statement is made by Manu about changing one caste for another, but possibilities of such change are at least theoretically conceded. For example, it is laid down in Manu that "if the female issue of a Brahmana male and a Sudra female bears children to one of the highest caste, the inferior (tribe) attains the highest caste within the seventh generation. Thus a Sudra attains the rank of a Brahmana and (in a similar manner) a Brahmana sinks to the level of a Sudra. The same thing happened with the offspring of a Kshatriya or of a Vaisya." This rule merely expands and clarifies the principle enunciated in *Gautama Dharma-sutra*, and indirectly supports the view that intermarriage even between Brahmanas and Sudras was not altogether unknown, and not always so severely condemned as in some rules of Manu and later *Dharma-sutras*.

Ramanbhai, cousin of Sakrabhai, with BSF officer Jayram Verma

outside. The Patel boys explained that all they had done was punish Sakrabhai because he had stolen a *chadar*, a piece of cloth to cover himself (not that even this allegation was ever substantiated).

We went to Jetalpur only on 12 March; in the meantime a lurid agitation by caste Hindus had set the whole problem of caste on its head. Largely because of the agitation by casteist Hindus, and the fact that harijans refused to surrender completely (as was expected) to the attacks on them, a train of politicians and government media had trooped through the roads of Jetalpur, and everyone had called on Jetalpur and promised justice etc, etc. Ramanbhai, who is not only prepared but eager to give evidence in court, has been given police protection to ensure his "safety." The BSF's 104 Batallion, under inspector Jayram Verma (a most honest and sincere man), has turned up. But behind all this is another story—a story captioned 'Where *will* you escape? How long can the government protect you? One day, these uniforms will go—then what?'

Sakrabhai's father, Premabhai Alabhai, stares blankly at the world; perhaps he has been doing that for a very long while. Hunger and atrocity have drained all meanings from his mind, perhaps he has no concept of any difference between life and death, it does not seem to mean anything in particular to him that his young son has died. He used to beg to survive before, he still begs to eat what he can: someone gives the old man something or the other. Surely he cannot be as old as he looks; his son was only 24. But hunger is a very corrosive acid, it melts the bones and leaves deep rivulets on the skin, and it puts a yellow film across watery eyes and finally hunger rapes the heart and kills the mind.

Ramanbhai, and the other harijan youth, do not want to become Premabhai Alabhai; they want to wear watches, and go to barbers. Ramanbhai has got a job in a bank, thanks to reservation, but what about the others? There are graduates among the harijans of Jetalpur, graduates created not by money or by right, but created by dreams, and these graduates still have to work as farm labourers. After the publicity given to the death of Sakrabhai, the Patels are taking revenge in the way they know best—by squeezing the harijans economically, refusing to given them anything but the minimal amount of work. The only caste Hindus who are helping the harijans are the *darbaras*, but how long can they go on doing so, they themselves are poor. What can the harijans do? One answer has already been floated from the Patel side: compromise, give false evidence so that the Patel boys who murdered Sakrabhai are not convicted, and the sustenance for the slaves will return.

Our last stop on our journey away from Jetalpur was on the upper floor of a typical well-off home. "Come and have a cup of caste tea," said our young host with a mischievous smile (the reference of course was to the fact that we had willingly tasted water and tea with the harijans). But there was not much banter when we went up. The Patel leaders were there,. and there was the excitement of war in their eyes; their voices rose easily; their accusations of ingratitude against harijans might have sounded reasonable to differently tuned ears. But the most interesting thing of all was their explanation of how Sakrabhai had died. The Patel boys had not killed him, we were told with brazen obstinacy; Sakrabhai had actually, they said, committed suicide in order to embarrass the Patel youth who had beaten him up.

One wonders: will that be the eventual verdict of the "authority" too?

THE AGITATION

Jetalpur was a cinder, another cinder thrown into the large fire that has been burning in harijan hearts. They did not react to Jetalpur with any organised violence, but the word spread, and this time government assurances of "justice" left them unmoved.

In the meantime, something else had happened—at the political level. In January 1980, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, without a Jagjivan Ram in her pack of cards and needing a man to represent the community which had always voted for her, even in the fiasco of 1977, picked up a young and loyal member of the Rajya Sabha and made him the minister of state for home, with charge of harijan affairs among his other duties. This immediately made Yogendra Makwana the most important harijan minister in Delhi, even though he did not have the rank of a cabinet minister. It was not long before Yogendra Makwana began to see himself as the Jagjivan Ram of the coming decades. His biggest achievement of his first year in power was pushing through a special component plan of Rs 500 crores in the sixth five year plan—and this was the banner he was going to carry.

He had started another launching pad, an organisation which he himself had started, the Anusuchit Jati Janjati Parishad, and using his vantage position in power units began sprouting up across the country. The rise and spread of Yogendra Makwana was watched closely in Ahmedabad, not only by his rival for harijan affections, Narsibhai Makwana, but also by leaders like chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki. Solanki and Yogendra Makwana had been friends once, but the price that power extracted from them was rivalry: Solanki, quite understandably, had no desire whatsoever to see anyone in Delhi pulling at his chair—particularly not the younger man called Yogendra Makwana.

In December last year, Makwana called a statewide conference of his harijan organisation. His devotees say that more than 20,000 harijans came; his critics put the figure at less, but there is general agreement that this was a bit of a success. (Narsibhai Makwana immediately organised a harijan conference of his own; it was, comparatively, a damp squib.) Yogendra Makwana now began the process of becoming a national leader, spreading his organisation into UP, MP, Rajasthan, Bihar, and even Kerala.

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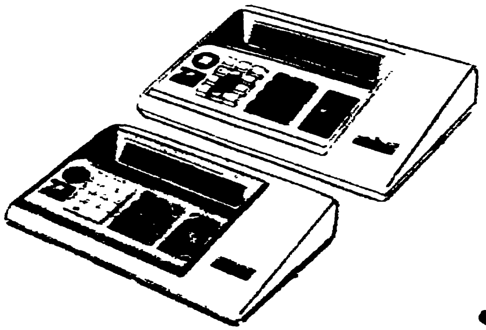
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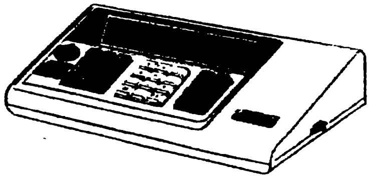
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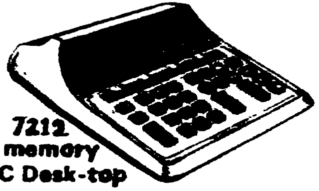
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Makwana's supporters allege that certain caste Hindu leaders even within the Congress(I) initially encouraged the medical students to launch their agitation against reservation (the chief minister was not part of this silly and dangerous game) in a small bid to tell Mr Makwana where exactly he could get off. Hari Prasad Vyas, the husband of health minister Kokila Vyas, is among those who are said to have encouraged the medical students in the beginning. Whatever be the truth, whoever may have patted the students on the back then, nobody seemed to realise then what exactly could happen, how dangerous this fire could be.

The potential for such a caste war exists not only in Gujarat, but all over the country—as the demonstrations and slogans against reservation in neighbouring Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh bear witness. Ours is a collapsing economy; there are no more easy jobs, and in such a situation caste Hindus are bound to simply close their eyes to the whole truth—the truth that the harijans, denied of confidence, education, money, opportunity, self-respect, will never get the smallest chance if they are not given a little help—so that they may retain their monopoly on jobs and privileges.

Gujarat's was a dangerous fire; it could spread so easily to the villages, where the upper castes, sole owners of land, needed the harijan as slaves to protect their diminishing earnings. An excuse was what everyone needed to crush the awakening harijan spirit so that it may go back to its age-old dormancy before it had time to really rise—and three decades of a liberal constitution and liberal policies had begun to make that slight, very slight, difference. Suddenly in a hospital where the harijan had only been the sweeper or the corpse carrier, harijan doctors began to become visible; harijan teachers started appearing in medical colleges—true, only two harijan teachers out of 131 in Baroda, but still two, and two was two more than nothing, here were two jobs which should have gone to the Shahs and Patels and Desais and Bhats, what business did the Makwanas and Parmars have in such a place—good lord, tomorrow the harijan surgeon might even begin to earn Rs 5000 a day, he might break into that closed racket which the medical profession sometimes becomes.

Harijans must know their place. That is it. That is the agitation.

If this is liberation, is it worth it? Both old and young women are commonly seen in Ahmedabad pulling carts overladen with goods

NOBODY IS LISTENING

Whoever else may or may not have known about the potential dangers which the agitation could cause, the students and their leaders were clear enough about what they wanted to do, and what they wanted to do was put an end to any benefits which the harijans had. If this had not been their aim, the agitation would have ended almost as soon as it started, for the simple reason that the government gave in to all their original demands. Some would say that the government gave in too easily; in any case it gave in. But the students, instead of being satisfied, became arrogant. All subsequent efforts to calm the agitation, made by either the government or certain opposition leaders, were spurned. The aim of the students was simple: to continue the fight till government and public sector employees (for instance in the banks and LIC) were drawn in, till the villages caught fire, till the poison spread to other states.

And the press helped. Just one story will suffice. One large newspaper carried lurid details of harijans having raped caste Hindu women at a marriage reception. A 12-year-old girl had been raped, said the newspaper, 12 girls were missing. Rumours took over, passions rose; the word was spread in the villages that the harijans had committed this "atrocity," that this was the surest example of the new attitude of the harijans (who do *they* think they are?). A crowd collected at the Vadilal Sarabhai Hospital where the rape vic-

Will someone give Bina a job?

Binabehn Muljibhai Parmar is an MA in sociology, a degree she took four years ago. She has never failed in her academic life, always either passing in the first or second divisions. She has applied to a large number of firms for any kind of job; she has applied to the government—but despite all this talk of reservation, and all this talk of there being not enough educated harijans to fill even the available posts, Bina does not yet have a job. She is a harijan; and among the poorest of the poor.

Her father met us in his one-room hut in Jetalpur; the clothes on his back were in tatters; he sat on his haunches, and had very little to say. What could he say? How much could he complain? Bina has to support her aged parents, and she is often forced to make enough money for a meal by working as a labourer on the land. This is not a very encouraging sight—particularly for the very young harijans who are being taught that education is the gate to liberation: if this is all what the years of sacrifice by Bina's parents and her own struggle to convert her ability into a degree has achieved, then what is the point of education?

Binabehn, the MA in sociology who is forced to work as a labourer

Bina's story challenges the myth that jobs are simply waiting for harijans to go out and grab them. That is just not true. Harijans are still, despite the marginal benefits granted by the central reservation policy, defeated by the problems that have defeated them for centuries—the main one being lack of confidence. Bina, who lives in Jetalpur, Ahmedabad district, is not a girl without confidence. But she certainly is a lady without any luck.

Harijan houses burnt in Dhetroj

tims were supposedly being treated.

The truth was that no such thing had ever happened: this was complete concoction. Similar was the case of the report that harijans had attacked the biggest and oldest Jain temple in Ahmedabad at Gomtipur. The story was completely untrue—but it served its purpose, which was to inflame the Jain community.

I had asked one harijan leader, who belongs to the Congress(I), why they did not contradict such stories immediately. His reply was simple: "They don't publish what we say...We have reached a point where we don't even want to talk...Nobody is listening."

DHETROJ

India does not have a silent majority. It has a number of silent minorities, treated with varying degrees of contempt and tolerance by other bands of minorities who have managed to acquire political, social and economic power thanks to accidents of birth, natural consequence of history and a pernicious set of social laws perpetrated in some cruel past and preserved into a cruel present. And of all the minorities, harijans and tribals are surely the worst off. On every harijan face lie the scars of a condemned race; the eyes talk not only about a hungry, very hungry stomach, but also of spit on the face and shit on the head.

In some stray corners, though, a little change has finally come. Ahmedabad is a boom city; its textile and other mills have helped make Gujarat the second most industrialised state in the country. And the harijans, who have little land, have found jobs in textile mills which enable them to keep the fire burning in their homes, which enable them to start thinking of an education for their children—and these are luxuries which their brethren in most other parts of the country do not enjoy.

Dhetroj, like Jetalpur, can hardly be called a village. A two-hour drive from Ahmedabad, it is large and prosperous, with a population of around 10,000. But there is one important difference between Jetalpur and Dhetroj: the harijans of Dhetroj are much better off. They still live away from the others, in a corner-but there are solid houses in this corner, there is a cooperative housing estate, even the poor of this harijan community seem to have enough for two meals.

On 15 February, a harijan teacher told us, a group of urban youth came to Dhetroj and apparently told them about the counter—revolution that was sweeping the citv: what was Dhetroj, with its huge Patel population, doing at this hour? Sleeping? Tch, tch. The message was received and understood. On the sixteenth there were two harijan marriages; the decorations were attacked by caste Hindu youth. But things returned to normal after that, for a while.

Until the evening of 27 February. Dusk had fallen and the harijans were sitting down to their evening meal when the first attack came: a heap of grass collected for cattle was burnt down. The harijans, realising that trouble was ahead but not knowing what to do, put out the fire and began collecting at one or two points. Then some caste Hindus, armed, entered the harijan area and began abusing the harijans. Suddenly a dangerous sound was heard, the sound of an old war cry, and the roll of the drum calling upon people to attack. And a horde of caste Hindu youth, armed with spears and knives and hatchets, carrying kerosene, entered the harijan locality and started setting the houses on fire and looting. The din that they created must have been heard miles away, but the police in an outpost opposite the village did not stir, for quite a while, until the arson had taken its toll, and then turned up to disperse the mob. (When we went to meet the police officer in charge at Dhetroj, he brusquely refused to answer any questions; his silence was perhaps understandable, but his rudeness was not—but of course policemen like him cannot be touched by the government.)

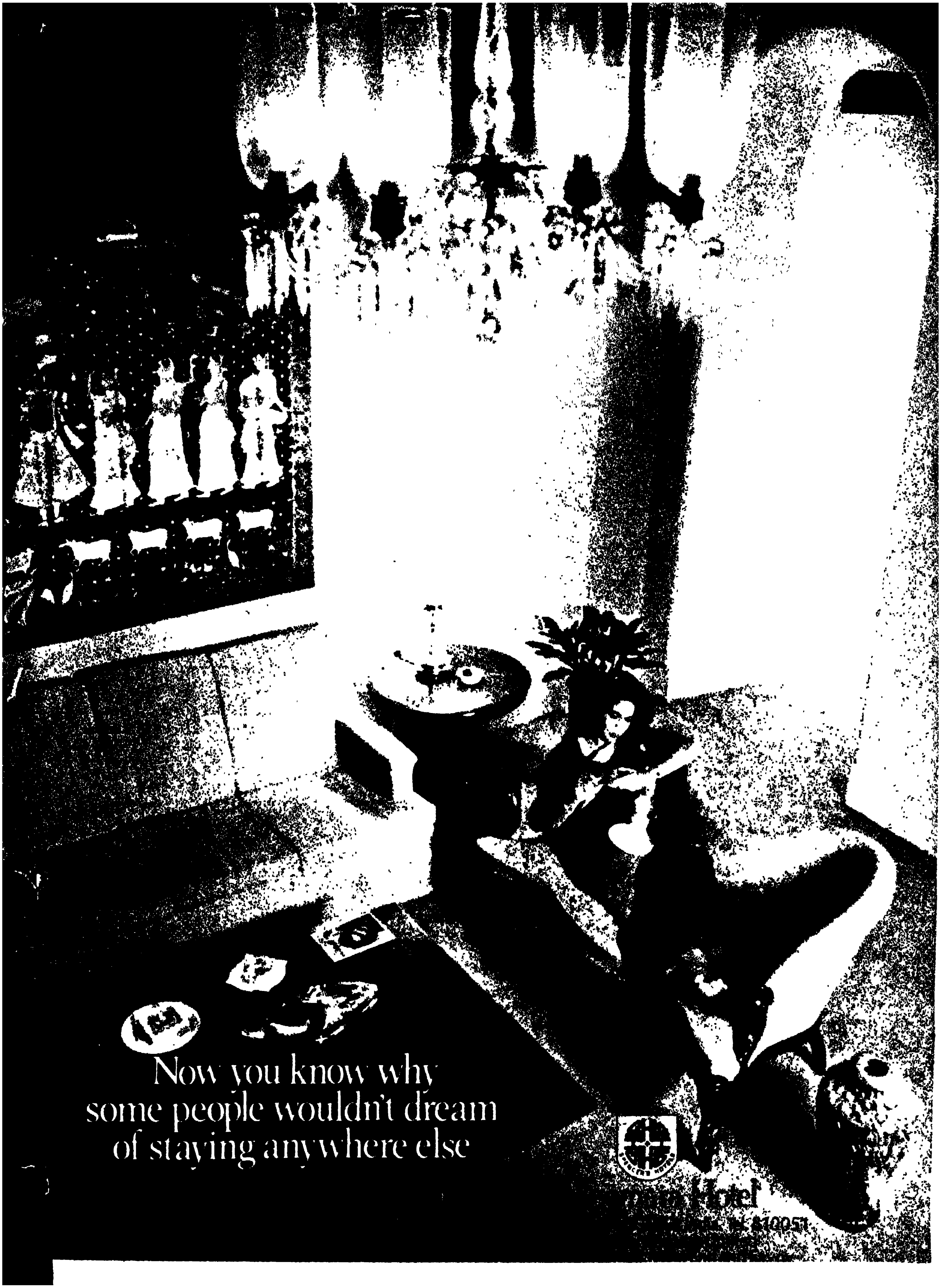
When the mob had disappeared, **the harijans, around 700 in number, picked up whatever belongings they could and started their *hijri* (an Arabic word, which has crept into Gujarati, meaning flight). They had hardly gone more than a kilometre when they came across a village called Kukwao, where the *darbaras* (caste Hindus themselves, akin to the *thakurs* of the north, but with far less wealth; in fact, they themselves are considered economically backward, and are hostile to the Patels, who are the really dominant caste of Gujarat) offered them shelter, food and protection. All over Gujarat, *darbaras* have been the only ones who have helped the harijans; many observers feel that without this protection, the plight of the harijans would have been much, much worse. One reason is that the darbaras identify with the chief minister, and he has staked his government on this issue.**

When we went there, not one caste Hindu wanted to discuss what had happened. The evidence was in front of our eyes—the empty, burnt and looted harijan houses. But no one remaining in Dhetroj claimed to have any knowledge of what had happened; no one certainly had any remorse. It was an interesting conspiracy of silence. This silence was broken only by some teenagers returning from their high school—kids. We asked them if they would welcome the harijans back to Dhetroj. Of course we all know that the government will ensure that the harijans eventually go back, but the kids spoke a greater truth when they answered, "Welcome them back? This time we will ensure that not even tea reached them if they are forced upon us."

SABARMATI

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's ashram overlooks a now empty Sabarmati, aborted somewhere upstream by a twentieth century dam. Some conventional photographs in a museum highlight moments of his life; his old residence contains a few of his meagre possessions. A peacock struts about on the lawns; soon the sun will dip away into another world, and the gates of the ashram will be closed. On one wall will remain, unread, a prayer which no one has prayed for a long, long time, Gandhiji's prayer, ***Hey namrata ke sagar:***

Lord of humility dwelling in a little pariah hut, help us to search for Thee throughout that fair land watered by Ganga, Brahmaputra and Jamuna, give us receptivenes, give us openheartedness, give us Thy humility, give us the ability and willingness to identify ourselves with the masses of India, O God, who helps only when man feels utterly humble, grant that we may not be isolated from the people. We should serve as servants and friends. Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice, embodiments of godliness, humility personified, that we may know the land better and love it more. ■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Colourful Karanjia's breakthrough daily

They used to gather in the evenings at Jal Patel's house, and the conversation was the typical jibe-and-take of journalists. Someone told Russy Karanjia, the high-profile editor of *Blitz*, "RK, you've been supporting Russia, but you still have not managed to get an interview with Krushchev." Frank Moraes was there, and he offered Russy Karanjia a case of Scotch if he could get an interview with Krushchev within three months. It began as a bit of a joke, but Russy Karanjia took up the challenge.

He approached the Soviet ambassador in Delhi, and was told, quite truthfully, that Krushchev did not believe in giving individual interviews. Karanjia then went to Cairo to meet his friend Nasser. Nasser had just jailed the communists in Egypt, and in the interview to *Blitz* he attacked the Soviet Union bitterly. Karanjia then went to London, and met the Soviet ambassador there. The case he presented was simple. he himself was a socialist and a friend of the USSR, and it pained him to see Nasser so critical of the Soviets. Could anything be done? If the Soviet Union was interested in friendship with Nasser and Egypt, why didn't Krushchev say so through the columns of *Blitz*? The Soviet ambassador to UK forwarded the request.

Russy Karanjia did not have to wait long. Suddenly one day in London, six commissars turned up, virtually bundled him onto the plane, and before he knew it he was in front of Krushchev. He interviewed Krushchev for three hours, broken into two sessions because Krushchev had to go to the airport to welcome Soekarno. (Krushchev laced the interview with excellent vodka.) It was in this interview that Krushchev promised to build the Aswan dam for Egypt as a gesture of friendship. So Russy Karanjia got his case of Scotch, Egypt got the Aswan dam—and Nasser, in gratitude, also gave Russy Karanjia the highest honour of Egypt.

Such has been the life of Russy Karanjia.

The first controversy that Russy Karanjia was involved in had nothing to do with marxism, or fatcat racketeers, or even the Shah of Iran; neither was there anything particularly frank, free and fearless about it. The controversy was about Hollywood films, starting with a letter that Russy Karanjia wrote to the staid columns of the *Times of India*. Karanjia was only a first year college student then, but already he was responding to the scent of excitement that wafts around controversy. And, some would say typically, he fuelled that controversy himself by writing bogus letters to the *Times*, abusing his own original letter It was a prank, but it took him straight into the heart of journalism; he landed his first job, and where else but in the *Times*?

Controversy: that word would soon become synonymous with Russy Karanjia, the man who would send an inexpensive tabloid weekly into a record number of ordinary Indian homes and on the other hand, also into the hushed rooms from where the rulers of many nations directed the affairs of their peoples. Karanjia has now spent more than four decades in racket-busting, muck-raking journalism, a style he introduced and took to powerful heights. And if occasionally Russy himself got a little busted, or someone began throwing muck back at him, well, that was part of the game, wasn't it? But whatever happened, Russy Karanjia, who has seen governments come and go, friends rise to supreme power and then lose it, who has seen great mentors succumb to the call of age, retained his smile with the aplomb of a buccaneer—wearing his beautifully tailored shirts, getting his fingers carefully manicured, keeping his face an envy of health clubs.

And now, at an age when others might want to retire to a life rid of tensions, Russy Karanjia is putting all his efforts and energies into a major new editorial effort: he is starting a daily English newspaper from Bombay. Such an adventure has not really happened in recent memory: daily newspapers in English have closed or withered; no one has started a major English daily from a city like Bombay. Only a man with a gambler's courage, a professional's skill and a young man's energy could even begin to think of such a venture. Russy Karanjia had all three when as a very young man he started *Blitz*; he apparently still has all these qualities when as an aged man he is starting the paper he has named, very simply, *The Daily*. And this venture is in a city which already has perhaps the best that English daily journalism can offer in the country: the venerable and rich *Times of India*, the adolescent but secure *Indian Express*, and the *Free Press Journal*, all with well-protected markets and better-protected advertising lineage. However, Karanjia was convinced of one simple thing—that Bombay was bored by this "quality" journalism, and that these papers did not give Bombay the attention it deserved.

In addition to a press and journalists (brought over amidst some controversy from the *Indian Express*; a virtual convoy of both desk and reporting staff deserted the Bombay wing of Ramnath Goenka's empire), Russy Karanjia had also acquired something he considered very valuable indeed. a son-in-law. Karl Mehta dresses as nattily as his father-in-law· both of them seem walking advertisements of Charagh Din, the makers of expensive signed shirts in Bombay. Mehta became friendly with Russy's daughter Rita Karanjia almost a decade ago; they got married in 1977 (they have a two year old daughter called Farah. Named after the Shah of Iran's wife? I asked. No, replied Karl Mehta stoically). Mehta was a purser then with Air India, but it did not take him very long to join his wife in his father-in-law's small empire. These two would inherit the empire, so it was only logical that they learnt how it worked. Mehta now manages the business, and was instrumental in setting up the infrastructure for *The Daily*. He seems confident about its success too: he claims that the initial print order will be 40,000 copies and the graph will climb to 80,000 in three months—at which point they will stop increasing the circulation. The optimism of youth is very refreshing.

Incidentally, long ago Russy Karanjia edited a daily tabloid in Bombay. In the late 1930s, under Hamilton, he had begun the *Morning Standard*, and it immediately picked up 30,000 buyers, which was a pretty big circulation in those days. But the vagaries of Hamilton's spending and the weak livers of the financiers (those were the troubled pre-world war II days) managed to close down the *Morning Standard*. Ever since then Russy Karanjia has wanted to give Bombay the kind of paper he thinks Bombay needs. In March 1981, the dream has finally come true. It remains to be seen how long the dream will survive.

Daily editor-in-chief, R. K. Karanjia makes a point to the editorial staff

PHOTOGRAPHS OF DAILY OFFICE BY FEROZE MISTRY

“Publish and be damned”

Russy Karanjia, the editor of Blitz *has created history and fulfilled his old ambition with the launching of the Bombay tabloid,* The Daily. *In this exclusive interview with* M. J. Akbar *he speaks of his beginnings as a journalist, his hopes, his political leanings and his philosophy of life.*

Q: How did you get into journalism?

A: By accident. I had graduated from Wilson College (Bombay) and I was booked for Cambridge University. I had old-fashioned parents, you know, and they expected me to go to Cambridge and then join the civil service. I was too young for admission and I had to wait for one year, so I started my post-graduate course at Bombay University. Being bored, I wrote a letter to the *Times of India*. And this letter created a controversy.

Q: What kind of controversy?

A: It was something to do with Hollywood—films. To add to the controversy, I began writing letters replying to my own letters—great fun, you know. Then by accident I met Ivor Jehu, one of the editors of the *Times of India*, at a party: he was the number two. We fell into a conversation and he asked me what I was doing, and I said I was writing bogus letters to the *Times of India*. He was shocked: he was in charge of the letters page, and he said he’d report me to the police for fraud etc—anyway, he said, I should see him the next day. By the time I’d finished, I’d got a job. They sent me to the proofreaders’ desk to start. Then I was a reporter, became a sub-editor, and then special correspondent. Jehu was very fond of me, and since he was also the correspondent of many London papers, he used to pass on assignments for British papers—including *The Times*—to me. I remember one scoop: there was the story of a British lord who came to India and disappeared. I was able to find him out: he had stayed back in one of the princely states because he had become some maharajah or nawab’s boyfriend.

Then they wanted me to do a story on someone called the Fakir, in north-west frontier, who was supposed to be keeping the British army occupied with his guerilla warfare. I was going to Quetta on a holiday anyway, my grandfather was in Quetta, and he knew everyone there. I discovered that this story of the Fakir was a myth, a lie to feed the press.and people with dramatic stories. So I said, fine, if they want to feed the press with myths, I’ll also join in. I came back to Bombay and told Jehu that there was no story, but one could always be cooked up. He said, ‘Let’s see what you can do.’ So I went to the Bombay docks area, got half a dozen strapping *pathans*, borrowed a gun from the Wadias, and photographed the “Fakir” sitting with a gun with half a dozen *pathans* around him. There was also a fantasised interview and it was all published in the mass-circulated British paper *People* on page one. I got my highest payment for that story: one thousand rupees.

Oh, we had a lot of such incidents. Once, the maharaja of Patiala who was chancellor of the chamber of princes then, called a top secret meeting of princes at Bombay’s town hall, where the press could not go. There was a total ban. My editor asked me if I could get the story. I tried my best, I had some friends, but could not get permission to enter. So ultimately I decided to become a prince myself. My father had a beautiful stick with a gold handle, presented to him by the Amir of Afghanistan. I borrowed a Rolls Royce from one of the companies, drove up and, swishing my cane, walked in. This story appeared on the front page of the *Times of India* and all the British papers.

When Hamilton (a well-known journalist of the 1930s and ’40a) left the *Times of India*, he started the *Sunday Standard*; he had a couple of editors from Fleet Street with him. One day Hamilton came desperately to my house—he and I used to know each other—and asked me if I could help. He offered me a “first class job” if I would help out. What was wrong, I asked. The editor was drunk, he replied.

So that was my opportunity. I went to the office, and as soon as the other staff of the *Sunday Standard* saw me they walked out. Hamilton and I worked through the whole of Saturday and of Saturday night and brought out the *Sunday Standard*. Hamilton thought it was a fine piece of work, and immediately made me the deputy editor. Later I became editor, and also started the *Morning Standard*.

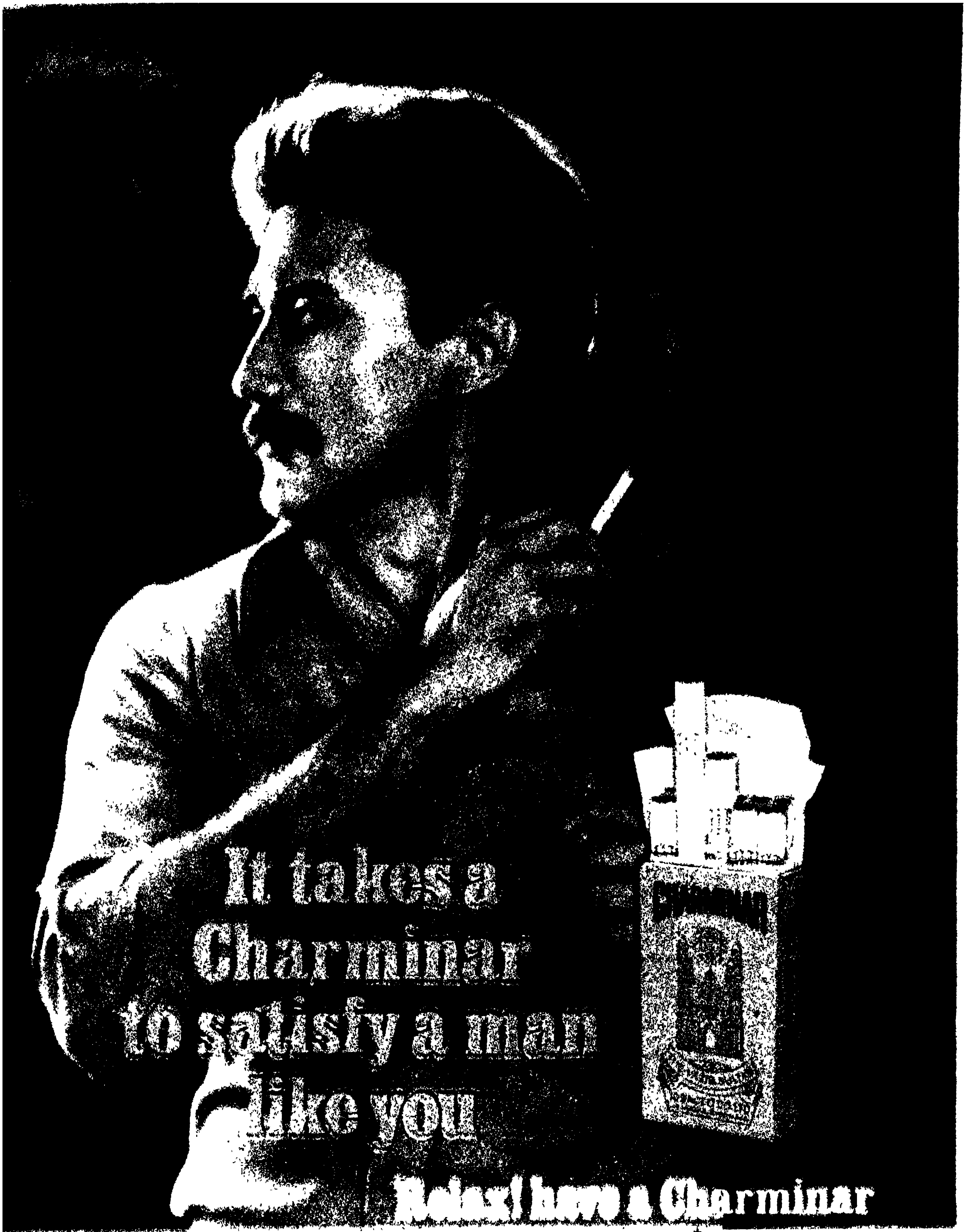
Q: Later, this became the Indian Express.

A: Yes; then Goenka took it over. We used to have a lot of touble: every day we needed money. We didn’t have any capital. That is one of the great difficulties of *Blitz* too. We started *Blitz* on a capital of Rs 5,000. We have very little capital. For this venture (the daily newspaper) too I have borrowed all the money. All through the life of *Blitz* we have had difficulties. But every time someone has knocked me down, I have comeback. Take the time when we walked out of the High Court because the judge showed such partiality to Devdas Gandhi, who was against us. ‘Sit down Mr Gandhi, please have coffee... mango juice please...you look tired’ and on and on the judge went. We walked out in protest and *in absentia* we were fined Rs 10,000. My partners did not like this kind of thing, so they deserted me.

It was Horniman who taught us to dare, to publish and be damned. He provided us with the legal guts and knowledge. Every time a partner left, my share in the company increased; when Mehta left I became the sole proprietor of *Blitz* and from then somehow *Blitz* began looking up.

Q: There is talk that you have got Arab petrodollars to help out with the daily newspaper you are starting.

A: Rubbish. *Blitz* has made enough profits to start a new publication. It contributed Rs 7 lakhs for the new publication. Central Bank of India loaned us Rs 24.93 lakhs for all the machines, and we propose to collect, by way of



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The Daily *editorial board meeting*

advertisements, another Rs 10 lakhs.

Q: People keep saying such things because you have a bad name regarding relationships with foreign governments.

A: So far as Nasser was concerned, Jawaharlal Nehru himself introduced me to him: after such an introduction I could not have made a single pie out of my relationship with him. Yes, they paid if they took out any supplements in *Blitz*. Every year we had a supplement, and we got something like Rs 2 lakhs, which was the normal price. It is all on record. Similarly with the Shah of Iran, the other big friendship. There again, it was Lal Bahadur Shastri. I remember he said something to the effect that when your neighboud is your enemy, make sure that your neighbour's neighbour becomes a friend. I was able to help Shastri out because of my relationship with Nasser. Indonesia's Soekarno once put him into a tight corner over a resolution at an Afro-Asian conference in Cairo, on Kashmir. I rang up Nasser in his bedroom since he had already gone to sleep, and he said, "Don't worry. I want the friendship of your Prime Minister. He is a very nice man, and I shall do the needful."

At the moment I have cooled to the Arabs. They are not able to do anything. They are so utterly helpless. I mean, just one little nation like Israel is smashing up Lebanon, and Arabs are not doing anything except fighting amongst themselves. It is a terrible situation.

Q: What do you hope your newspaper The Daily *will achieve—apart from fulfilling an old ambition of yours?*

A: Ambition, yes. But it will also fill a vacuum. Bombay has no newspaper it can call its own. Bombay does not have voice. I organised the Save Bombay Committee. And we found the press just would not give the publicity due to an orgainsation which had literally saved Bombay—saved the Oval maidan, for instance. I got Mrs Gandhi to personally intervene against the then chief minister Mr V. P. Naik and stop the orgy of the highrise building racket. But the Save Bombay Committee got no publicity—and I don't blame the press, really; they are all national dailies. *Blitz* itself is a national weekly. We haven't got the space for Bombay news and Bombay is rotting. It is being sent to destruction from every side: the government, the corporation. There is corruption. During my career I have realised that newspapers do not make money; they make power. And if power can be used for a good purpose...Bombay has given me everything; I came to Bombay before I was ten.

Q: What do you think of Bombay's existing English dailies?

A: First of all, they are old-fashioned. The *Times of India* is the Old Lady of Bori Bunder, and the age shows. It hasn't changed with the changing times. Except for removing classified advertisements from the front page, it is the same old Victorian journal.

We need a powerful press to fight the battle for Bombay's citizens. We must make *The Daily* the paper of our readers. *Blitz* started on nothing but readers' letters. I had no staff, no money, nothing. Readers gave us our frontpage stories. Readers gave us the money to fight the big cases. Once the people have faith in you...

Q: Your personality has dominated Blitz: Blitz *is Karanjia really. How much is your personality going to dominate the daily?*

A: It is not. I won't write much. I may change a headline: my reader, the middle class, the lower middle class reader must be able to understand the headline—that's my instinct.

Q: Is it going to be a leftist and crusading paper?

A: Of course.

Q: Then why should you expect the capitalists and industrialists to support you and your paper with advertising and finance? Will it not be in the interests of the capitalists to kill the paper right now, when it has just started, when it is much easier to do so.

A: They will not kill it, I hope. I think the industry will support the paper. The Tatas and others supported the Save Bombay campaign, because the more intelligent among the industrialists realise that this kind of order, where one half is pitted against the other (which is the subject of my first editorial) will not do. On one side of the street you have the beautiful new council hall—an absolute waste. Across the street, only a month ago, lived about 5,000 people who built the council hall, the workers, and they were shunted out with such vengeance—it forced me to repeatedly say that if such things continue, Bombay will burn. These people—let a George Fernandes or a Sharad Joshi come to their rescue, and it will not be a Rasta Roko agitation anymore, it will be a City Roko demand. Already things have started happening. Middle class Maharashtrians who did not get water for three days in Girgaum paralysed the city—and got their water in half an hour.

Q: But you yourself belong to the rich half of Bombay.

A: I do, yes—but Nehru too belonged to the rich half. *Blitz* is my test. We have fought all the seven devils—of monopoly, capitalism etc—and survived.

Q: Survived to become the most colourful journalist in the business today.

A: Is that why industrialists advertise in *Blitz*? People have called me red, people have called me yellow, people have given me all kinds of colours. Once I put a hoarding outside this office. We put all the colours of the world, and the caption said, "Thank God, at least we are read." They abuse me because I started racket busting. When I started journalism, the *Times of India* would not use the word "diarrhoea" because the British *memsahibs* would get nausea if they read this word over their breakfast. They made efforts to destroy every leftist paper. But I survived, and once you survive...today they've accepted me. Tatas started *Current* against me. Dosu Karaka, my colleague, a very dear friend of mine, a man whom I loved, was taken away from here to start *Current*. Ultimately Karaka came back to me; he died working for me. There was R. P Aiyar. S. K. Patil took R. P. Aiyar from *Blitz* and gave him a paper called *Conch*. The *Conch* even published my bedroom gossip with my wife. R P. Aiyar eventually came back here, worked ten years for me before dying. He wrote some of the most beautiful stuff we published. That's life.

They say that as long as you are unsuccessful you are a communist; once a communist becomes successful he becomes a capitalist. So far as I am concerned, ever since I went as a war correspondent to central Europe in 1945, '46, '47, from Finland right down to Yugoslavia and Greece, and

I agree with Churchill that consistency is the virtue of donkeys. I don't believe in consistency of leadership; I only believe in consistency of principles

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I saw this wonderful new experiment called socialism, I have worked for the left. Whatever I may be, I am not a captialist.

Q: But are you an opportunist?

A: Yes; who's not? Opportunist in the sense that when opportunity comes I take it and wrestle with it. Today, one opportunity has come. I have got a press and can start a daily. I may be an opportunist but not in the bad sense of term.

Q: You tend to support the government in power.

A: Am I supporting Mrs Indira Gandhi right now? The government was thinking of suing me for breach of the Cabinet Secrets Act after we published the story about the Thal-Vaishet fertiliser deal.

Q: What about the Emergency?

A: I supported the Emergency because Rajni Patel and Siddhartha Shankar Ray came to my house, showed me the 20-point programme, and convinced me that with all these people around—who were also my friends, Madhu Limaye George Fernandes, etc—it was not possible to push such a programme into action. Now, to me a programme which serves the poor means more than personalities.

I did not think the Emergency was going to be the death of democracy. I was solemnly assured that it was for only six months. *Blitz* was put under censorship because I exposed Sanjay Gandhi's destruction of the Turkman Gate area. Then we took an interview with CPI leader Rajeshwar Rao. The government told me I could not publish it. I insisted on publishing it—at the Chandigarh session the CPI set up a stall to sell *Blitz.*

Q: Don't you think Blitz *has a credibility problem?*

A: May have. I agree with Churchill that consistency is the virtue of donkeys. I don't believe in consistency of leadership; I only believe in consistency of principles. And where have I failed in my principle of serving the poor and the weak? Show me one example. Every cause, even from the Telengana days, we took up. I was probably the journalist friendliest to Nehru; I used to have regular monthly interviews with him; two books have been published; but we suported the Telengana movement. One of my boys, Daruwalla, died in the struggle; he was a communist. I don't think any poor man will call me inconsistent.

Q: Did you have to do a lot of running around to get the financing for The Daily?

A: No. I mean, now we have come to be recognised as, and I dislike the use of that word, a power. Maybe a poor power in the monetary sense, but to me money has never mattered—probably because I have never felt any need for it. I will be frank with you. I was brought up by my grandfather who owned half of Quetta. My father was a top opthalmic surgeon. My mother has a lot of property in Bombay—of which I have no share at all; she's alive. Money does not matter to me. I have run the paper into trouble. If I had wanted I could have settled defamation cases for less, but I did not think in terms of money, I thought in terms of justice and my rights. So we have always opposed authority.

Q: For a leftist like you, isn't it strange that you are publishing Sai Baba's preaching?

A: I am, broadly, a marxist. But communists failed in this country because they never tried to plant the roots of this foreign plant deep into Indian soil. This country has a tremendous spiritual heritage; it is fantastic. I have lately gone into this because of *yoga*. Once I started *yoga* it took me into many occult experiences. For example, we two are sitting here and there is so much cosmic energy around us and we don't know how to use it. All this has led me to Indian philosophy, and I find in Sai Baba some kind of manifestation of cosmic energy.

Q: You have also started believing in astrology.

A: I believe it is a science, which we have lost—again a part of our tremendous spiritual heritage. Not only I, but great thinkers also believe in it. Once, we went with Nehru to meet Einstein in New York during some summit meeting. The great scientist, that great physicist had become a metaphysicist. Einstein believed that the same cosmic force which created him and therefore enabled human beings to create the atom bomb, had also created Gandhiji with his non-violence. And he told Nehru that since he was the descendant of Gandhiji he must fight for peace, to use non-violence against the atom bomb. But I am not spiritual in the decadent sense of the word, because I have become old, or senile. You know I am hardly that kind of man. I am modern, I am scientific, I believe in all the pleasures of life—I eat, I drink, I do everything.

Q: You told me a story once of a man who predicted your near-death.

A: Yes, He is here at Sandhurst Road, Bombay. He measures your shadow in the sun, and reads your *janmapatra.* You will be amazed. There is a person like that in Punjab also. Most of the foreign dignitaries who come—from the communist world or the capitalist world, or whether it is the Shah of Iran...they all go to consult fortune tellers.

I stopped. I didn't want it. The thing was so damned correct! He said I died at the age of nine (which was true; my mother had given me up for dead), and he said I would die again at the age of 60 but because my Jupiter was so powerful I would survive. It would be a miracle but I would survive. I was 58 then. Within two years it did hapen. I went to sleep perfectly healthy one night and woke up without any blood! But I survived, and now I am as healthy as ever.

Q: How are the other Bombay newspapers taking the arrival of The Daily?

A. I can already claim two proud achievements First, reportage is improving: Bombay city is already getting much more space Second, for the first time people who have always resisted wage boards etc have been forced to give higher salaries in order to keep their staff. When *Blitz* started it stimulated other papers and magazines. We broke through. We created a new kind of journalism. *Sunday* did it too; it created a new wave because people were tired of what they had been reading, particularly in the newspapers. In the *Daily* I am trying to combine the two—both the investigation and the news. ■

Communists failed in this country because they never tried to plant the roots of this foreign plant deep into Indian soil

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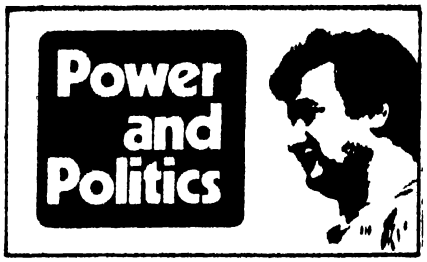
How Dalmia interviewed Russy Karanjia

Russy Karanjia had been recommended to R. K. Dalmia, who then owned Bennet Coleman, as the next editor of the Times of India. *Karanjia had already started* Blitz. *He was called to Delhi and given an appointment for eight o'clock in the morning. Dapper as ever, Karanjia came in his sophisticated morning suit, and this is what he saw:*

"Dalmia was lying in a kind of boat, a tub made of wood and full of oil. He was lying inside the tub, absolutely naked and getting himself massaged. And I was there, all suited and booted for the Delhi winter. He said, 'You're a communist, aren't you?' So I said, 'I'm not one, but I support communism.' He said, 'If you come to Times of India, *you will have to shed all this.' And I said, 'What all this?' He replied, 'Your clothes, your ideas, your philosophy, everything.'*

"By that time the damn oil was staining my suit, so I drew backwards. He said, 'No, come here.' I said, 'Mr Dalmia, what gave you the idea...why are you offering me the job?' He said I had been recommended for the editorship. I replied that I had my own paper. He said, 'I'll buy your paper.' He had assessed its worth already at Rs 10 lakhs. So I said, 'Thanks a lot, but my paper is not for sale.'"

Jyoti Basu's time is nearly up



By BARUN SENGUPTA

THERE seems to be little doubt now that the Left Front government of West Bengal will be sacked anytime between end-May and September. Mrs Gandhi and her ministers are, of course, all declaring from the house-tops that nothing undemocratic will be done to remove an elected state government, and some Left Front leaders are hoping that new developments in Assam or Gujarat will put Mrs Gandhi again in a tight corner and miraculously save their government. But big industrialists in Calcutta and independent political observers have little doubt that the end of Jyoti Basu's government is in sight.

Earlier, some people had thought that the sack would come towards the end of this year. They argued thus: The centre will not allow the Left Front government to supervise the Assembly elections due in early 1982 because no fair elections can be held with the CPI(M) in power. So the state government will be sacked anytime between September and December, provided Mrs Gandhi can bring the Assam situation under control. September has now become the outside limit because the Assam agitation appears to be dying out faster than expected. Also, Mrs Gandhi's hands are apparently being forced by the announcement to hold municipal elections in the state on 31 May. The Left Front government has sought to outmanoeuvre the centre with this. They hope to win all these elections and show the whole country how popular they are and thus make it difficult for the centre to dismiss them.

The biggest mistake of the CPI(M) leadership has always been to underestimate Mrs Gandhi. They did so in 1969 and had to pay a heavy price for it. They again underestimated her in 1980 and joined hands with many heterogeneous elements to topple the Morarji government. After Mrs Gandhi came back to power they thought that they could win her heart by good gestures. And now they are hoping they can outwit her by holding the municipal elections. They have yet to understand and assess her properly.

Whether this was also Mrs Gandhi's doing or not is quite immaterial, but the fact is that the Left Front is politically very isolated in West Bengal today. Other than a section of the CPI leadership, everyone is against the CPI(M) and the Left Front government. Although they have not formed any front or alliance against it yet, these sections are independently making the same charges against it. Be it the Marxist Socialist Unity Centre (SUC) or the Gandhian Congress(U), all are charging the Left Front government with unprincipled and partisan attempts to tamper with Bengal's cultural and educational heritage. Most of them are also saying that the police and the state administration are being used to solely further the CPI(M)'s interests. Some like the veteran Janata leader, Mr P. C. Sen, have openly said that with the Left Front government in power there cannot be any fair elections in the state.

These sections have all submitted memorandums to either the Prime Minister or the state governor. If Mr Y. B. Chavan now wants to oppose the dismissal of the Left Front government of West Bengal, Mrs Gandhi can promptly bring out the memorandum submitted to her by Mr P. R. Das Munshi, the West Bengal PCC(U) president, levelling all kinds of charges against Mr Jyoti Basu's government. If Janata president Chandra Shekhar comes forward to defend the government, Mrs Gandhi can again quote from Mr P. C. Sen's various statements in justification of the centre's action. In the next few weeks the non-Congress(I) opposition parties and prominent personalities of the state are expected to become more vocal in their criticism of the Left Front and bring forward more charges against it.

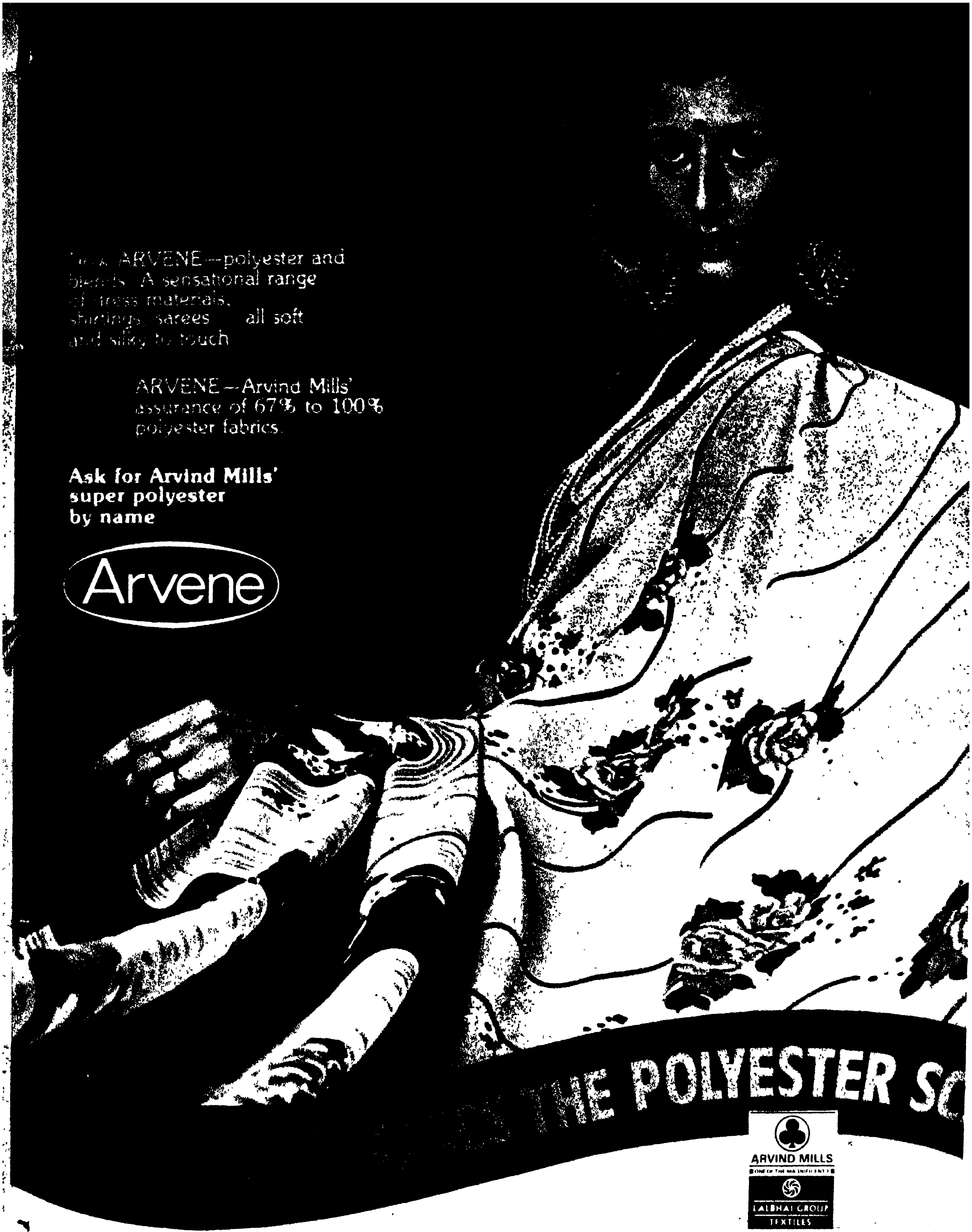
Some foolhardy Left Front leaders were banking heavily on the factionalism in the West Bengal Congress(I) to save them. It must be repeated that such people do not know Mrs Gandhi. She can stop this public bickering among West Bengal Congress(I) groups in a day if she really wants to. She just has to call the faction leaders and tell them sternly: Boys, no more fighting in public! And none of them will dare disobey her. Not that thereby she can achieve real unity among West Bengal Congress(I) leaders. But she can definitely achieve outward peace in the party anytime she likes.

So far as the chief ministership is concerned, she will never make her position clear before the Assembly elections are held. Mr Asoke Sen has of late become politically active, but his chances of becoming the next chief minister of West Bengal are remote. And though the Birlas and the Goenkas are still trying hard for Mr Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Mrs Gandhi cannot take another chance with him. She is not expected to instal in positions of power people who could make trouble for Rajiv Gandhi after her departure. Nor will she select either Mr Pranab Mukherjee or Mr A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury for the coveted West Bengal post. She needs men with Pranab Mukherjee's abilities beside her in Delhi. In all probability the next Congress(I) chief minister of West Bengal will be either Mr S. P. Mitra, the retired chief justice of the Calcutta High Court who was a member of Dr B. C. Roy's cabinet, or Dr Gopal Das Nag who is personally close to some top industrialists of Calcutta. But no name will be announced before the elections are over. Till then it will be Mrs Gandhi vs Mr Basu.

But, will it be possible for the Congress(I) to win the next West Bengal Assembly elections? Of course, yes. If they hold the elections within four to five months of the sacking of the Left Front government, it will not be difficult for the Congress(I) to win handsomely. Even in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections Congress(I) candidates secured about 74 lakh votes in West Bengal as against the Left Front's 94 lakhs. In West Bengal today victory will go to whoever conducts the elections. The only difference is that the CPI(M) manipulates election neatly and quietly and the Congress(I) does it openly and clumsily, as in 1972.

If this is so then why was the Congress defeated in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal? That was because of the misdeeds of the S. S. Ray ministry and the Emergency. A large number of even anti-CPI(M) people went against the government and the Congress. The government had antagonised the common man. It is impossible to rig elections or capture polling booths without the solid support of at least a section of the common people. The Congress(I) now has this support in abundance in rural West Bengal among the landed people. If they get police support these people will adopt every possible means to stop the CPI(M) from coming to power again. And then the CPI(M) will be able to test to what extent they have been able to make inroads into the state police force and how solid their new rural power base is.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the Congress(I) will win the next Assembly elections if they are held within four to five months of the dismissal of the Left Front government. And, I also have no hesitation in declaring that the urban middle class and poorer sections of the people of West Bengal will be worse off under a Congress(I) government.



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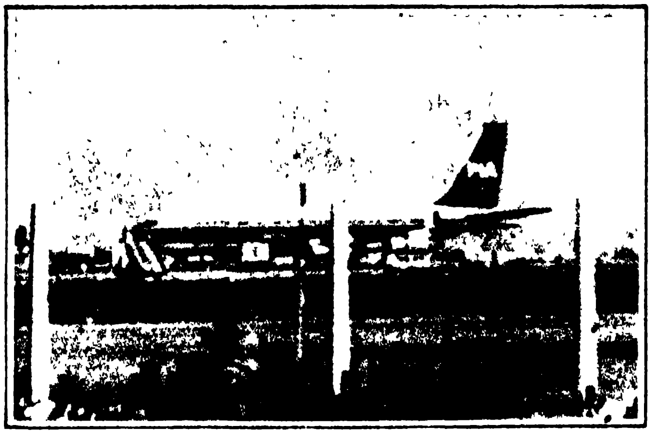
INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Hijack jolts Zia



When a PIA Boeing 720-B aircraft with 148 passengers and crew changed course and landed in Kabul on 2 March, there was proof positive of two things : Bhutto's ghost lives on in Pakistan and President Zia-ul Haq's position is very shaky.

ON 2 March a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Boeing 720-B en route to Peshawar from Karachi with 148 persons aboard suddenly changed course near Mianwali and landed on hostile territory, Kabul, at 4.57 pm IST. Nothing in the weather could have prompted this; how or why the plane landed at Kabul was not immediately known. Soon the Pakistan government's and PIA's worst suspicions were confirmed. A man calling himself Mohammad Alamgir and two others who claimed to be members of the little-known Alam-e-Zulfiqar (literally, "flag of Zulfiqar") had hijacked the plane. The men—all in their thirties—had with them pistols, light machine guns (LMGs), a large quantity of ammunition and something concealed in a plastic bag variously described as a "grenade-like device" and a "time bomb." They spoke fluent English and Urdu.

As PIA officials established radio contact with the ill-fated aircraft, Alamgir was ready to listen to them, holding his pistol to the pilot's head. His first response to the panicky messages and appeals was uncertain: he threatened to blow up the plane if his "demands" (none of which were stated) were not met in 24 hours. For a long while Pakistani officials were kept guessing about how many accomplices Alamgir had. There had to be more than two of them to keep watch over the aircraft's 148 passengers and crew. That was as far as the officials could get. As the plane stood menacingly on the Kabul airport runway, barely 700 yards from the terminal building, Soviet and Afghan troops encircled it from a safe distance. Among them was a ten-man Afghan anti-terrorist squad with Czech-made Scorpion submachineguns, gas masks and track suits under their military uniforms.

Meanwhile, frantic enquiries about the Alam-e-Zulfiqar movement were revealing: the organisation, described as the armed wing of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's banned Pakistan People's Party (PPP), was formerly called the Pakistan Liberation Army (PLA). It was supposedly set up by Bhutto's eldest son Murtaza (25), in London. Alamgir had declared his political goal to be the restoration of political liberties to Pakistan. Initially, Pakistani officials deliberately linked him with the PPP. This only angered both the young man and PPP spokesmen. The hijacker demanded that the officials withdraw their charge—in exchange, he would free all women and children in the aircraft. Naturally, the authorities gave in. They promised to broadcast the retraction. The PPP spokesmen too reacted strongly—they denied that the hijack had taken place on their instructions, and went a step further: "The hijackers are mistaken if they think that they can help the opposition by hijacking the plane," they said.

Maj Gen Rahim Khan, the Pakistan defence secretary and also head of the PIA was convinced from the start about who had masterminded the hijack: Murtaza Bhutto and the Argentinian-born internationally famous terrorist Carlos. He said Murtaza Bhutto had met Carlos only two weeks before the hijack in Libya. Besides, Murtaza himself had come to Kabul airport to speak to the hijackers. (Murtaza was being tried in absentia in a Pakistani court for anti-state activities in Afghanistan in 1980.) Khan alleged that the hijackers were actually following his orders. Alamgir, for his part, had confessed to being a wanted man.

Initially, the hijack seemed just another amateurish attempt to terrorise a government; later, as the days passed (till the time of going to press it had become the second longest hijack drama in history) the hijackers gave the impression of being stubborn, thorough and desperate; even quite clever.

A few hours after the plane arrived in Kabul, late in the night the airport staff took blankets and food aboard for the cold and hungry passengers. The aircraft was refuelled. Civil aviation authorities, after contacting the plane over radio, found that passengers were all safe and had been served meals.

Meanwhile, diplomatic problems began coming in the way of the Pakistan government's efforts to negotiate with the hijackers. A civil aviation official and a PIA executive arrived in Kabul on 2 March to join the Pakistani charged' affaires Rao Ali Bahadur for talks at the Afghan foreign ministry. The Afghans' stand was firm and clear: they would not allow the Pakistani team to establish radio contact with the plane because its safety was Afghanistan's responsibility.

Later the hijackers in a radio conversation stated their demands for the first time; they named 92 Pakistanis, including political prisoners who should be released from jail and flown to Kabul. Among them were some students and relatives of the three men, detained after recent political disturbances in Karachi. Nothing else happened on 3 March except that an Afghan doctor was allowed inside the aircraft to attend to a woman complaining of nausea from thick cigarette smoke.

On 4 March the hijackers asked the Kabul authorities to request permission to fly over Iranian territory. Later in the day a number of women and all the children on board were set free after the Pakistani retraction regarding Alamgir's political links came on the air. Sixteen women, ten children and two sick men were escorted from the plane to an airport hotel. Back in Pakistan confusion followed: a PIA plane which had been sent to pick up the women and children was refused landing permission by Kabul airport after it was airborne for 45 minutes.

On 5 March a Pakistani plane finally flew back to Peshawar with 28 women, children and sick men. A new detail had come to light by now. Two American women, Deborah Leighton Weisner and Charlotte Hubbel, had refused to get off without their male companions.

From the released hostages came of stories of all kinds: "They were threatening all the time, saying be quiet or we will blow up the plane with a time bomb," said a wide-eyed nine-year-old Zulfikar Shah. Bibi Khola, a mother of four was more charitable: "They never really harmed us. They gave me medicine."

March 6 was an eventful day. There was good news, and bad. The hijackers released a third sick man, Israf Shah. They also shot and killed one of the male hostages and dumped his body on the tarmac. The dead man, Tariq Rahim, ironically, happened to be an aide-de-camp of the former Pakistan PM, Z. A. Bhutto during his last days in power. He was also the son of Maj Gen Rahim Khan, the defence secretary. The reason for the killing was not clear (authorities speculated that it had probably resulted from a scuffle) because it occurred when officials were speaking to Alamgir over the radio. Seeing what had happened, Alamgir asked for a vehicle to carry Rahim's body away. An ambulance was rushed. The young man was still barely alive, writhing in pain on the tarmac. He was taken to hospital and declared dead.

General Zia insisted on treating the hijack as part of a feudal vendetta. He suggested an appropriately absurd solution: the three hijackers' relatives be handed over to the relatives of the hostages. But Zia knew too well what the hijack meant—political pressure on him was mounting. He announced a cabinet reshuffle, the result of which was an almost all-civilian government; only three army officers remained in the cabinet.

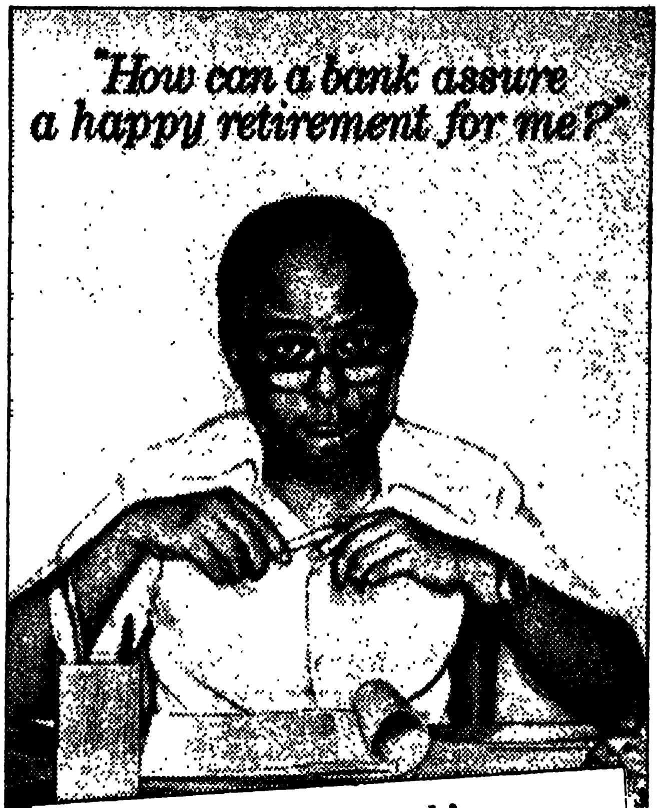
On 7 March, Maj Gen Rahim Khan said Pakistan could release only five of the political prisoners named by the hijackers. The others could not be freed because there are criminal charges against them, he said. The statement came after a four pm deadline had expired without incident. Two more sick men, both Pakistani nationals, and two American women were released. This left the total number of captives at 111, including three Americans, one Nigerian and one World Bank employee of unknown nationality. Back in Islamabad, Gen Zia seemed still unworried: "There is no need to get unduly worried ..such incidents take place in this world." Then, in defence, "Some people believe in agitation politics. They think public property is enemy property. I have always believed in politics of understanding." As if to prove his words, on 8 March the Pakistan government cracked down on the opposition. Begum Nusrat Bhutto, her daughter Benazir, along with 50 other PPP members and supporters were rounded up and thrown into Karachi district jail.

At the other end, the bargaining for human beings continued. Pakistan offered to release 20 political prisoners now in exchange for 100 hostages. But the hijackers were firm. They threatened to kill their captives one at a time if their demands were not met by 3 pm IST on 8 March. When 8 March came, the hijackers had decided their next step. They rejected the Pakistan government's offer; negotiations broke down. The Boeing 720 offloaded some cargo that night before leaving for Damascus.It was only at midday the next day that Pakistan officials got the news.

On the way to Damascus, the pilot of the ill-fated aircraft managed to radio a passing plane about the new development. The sky over the Syrian capital was dark and cloudy. It had rained hard the previous night. The plane touched down on the runway at about 4.45 am IST on 9 March, and taxied to a remote end of the airport.

On 10 March, the hijackers again extended the deadline for meeting their demands till 3.30 pm IST on 11 March, and repeated their threats. According to Syrian authorities, they scaled down their previous demand for 92 political prisoners to 55. The deadline expired, and yet again, was extended to 9.39 pm IST on 12 March. The Pakistani envoy to Jordan, Mr Shahryar Khan, who joined his Syrian counterpart to negotiate with the hijackers, said there was a "stalemate" at this point. "We will under no conditions release hardened criminals," Mr Khan said. The hijackers decided to return the compliment; they reverted to their earlier demand for 92 prisoners.

The latest on the subject was that the prisoners were on their way to Damascus and then Tripoli. How the drama ends is immaterial; it has already succeeded on two counts—in bringing Pakistan's internal situation to the world's notice, and unnerving a desperate administration. As Begum Nusrat Bhutto said over the telephone, "It (the hijack) demonstrates that many people are desperate for change." ■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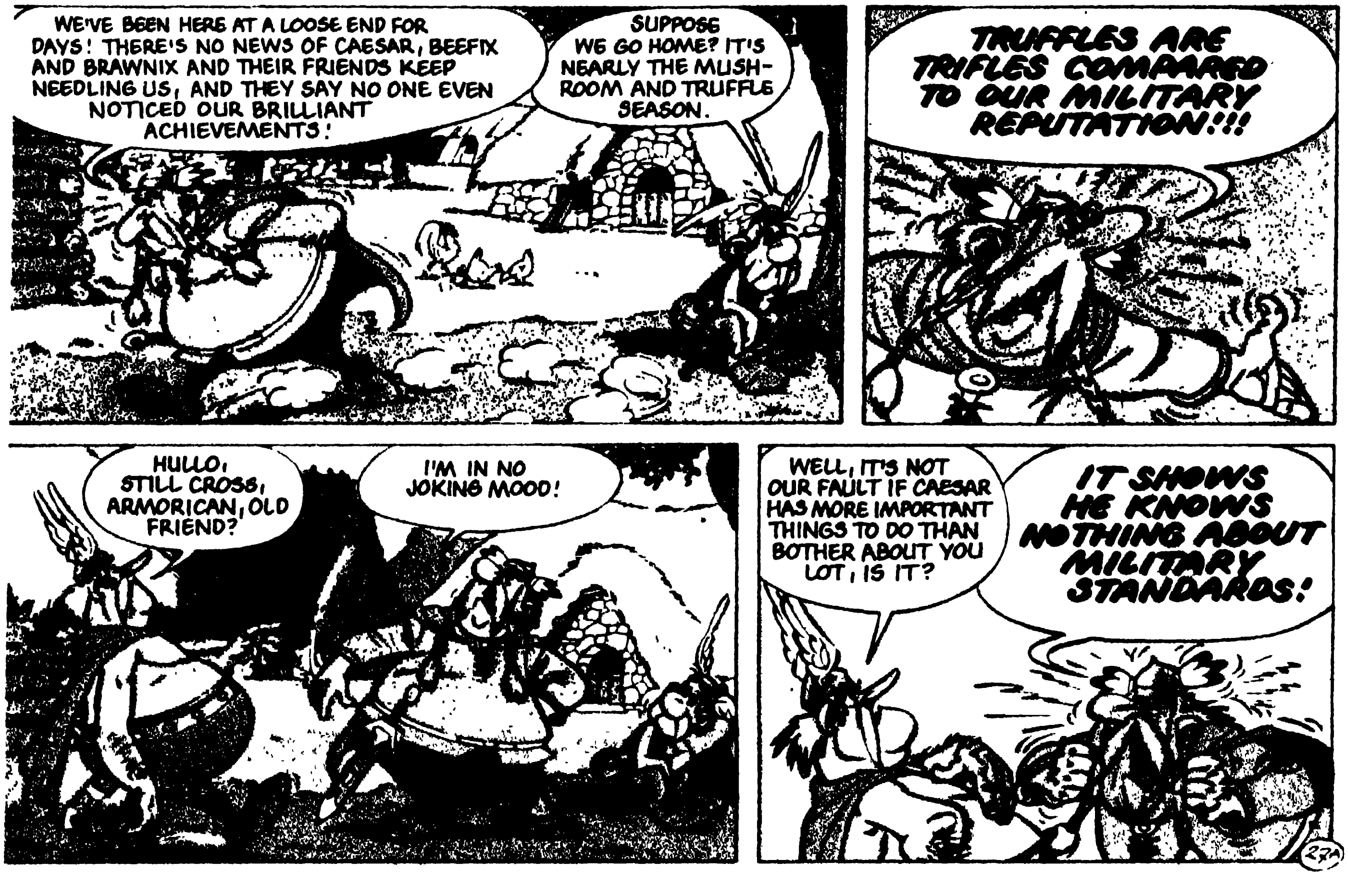
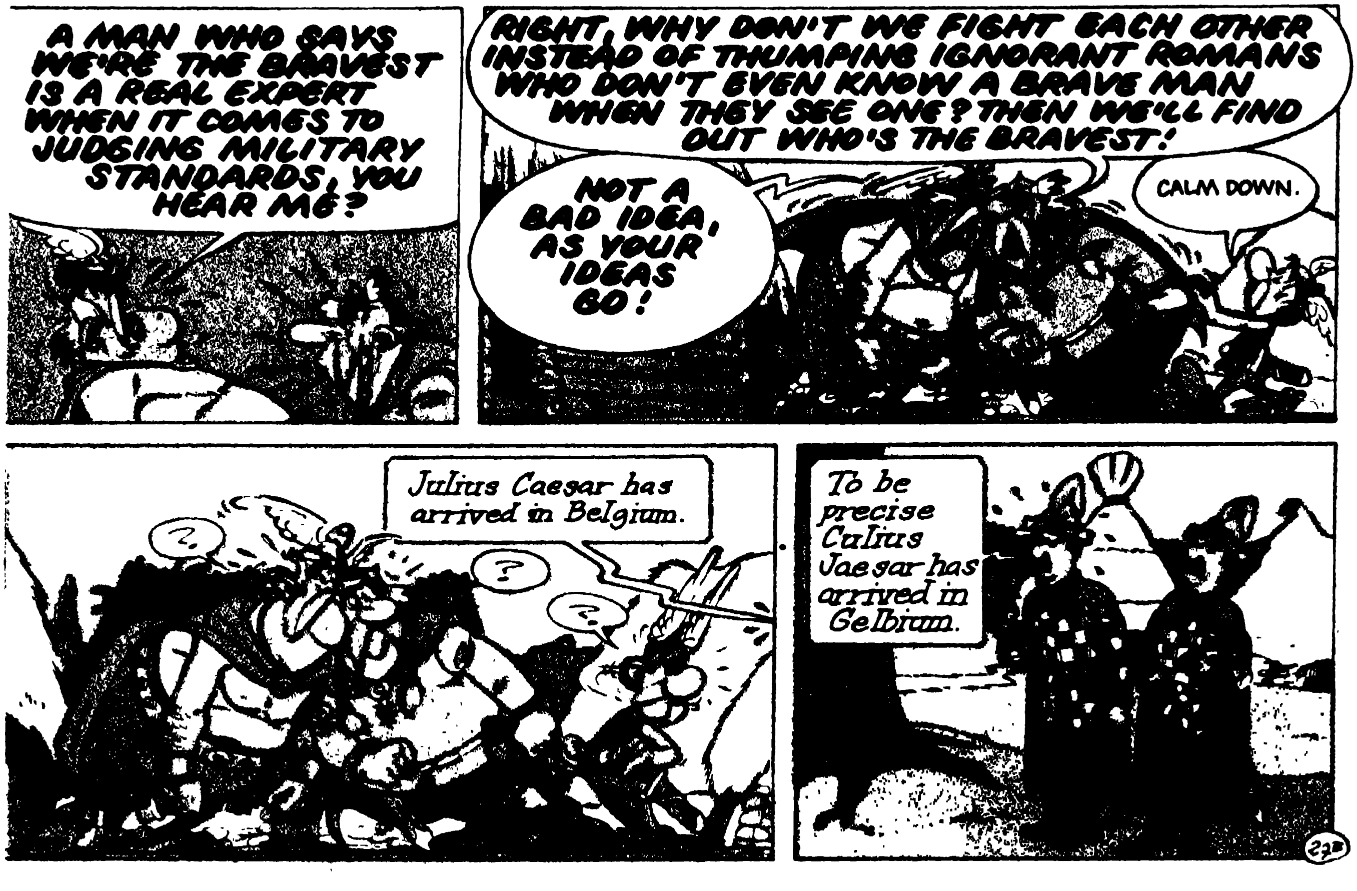
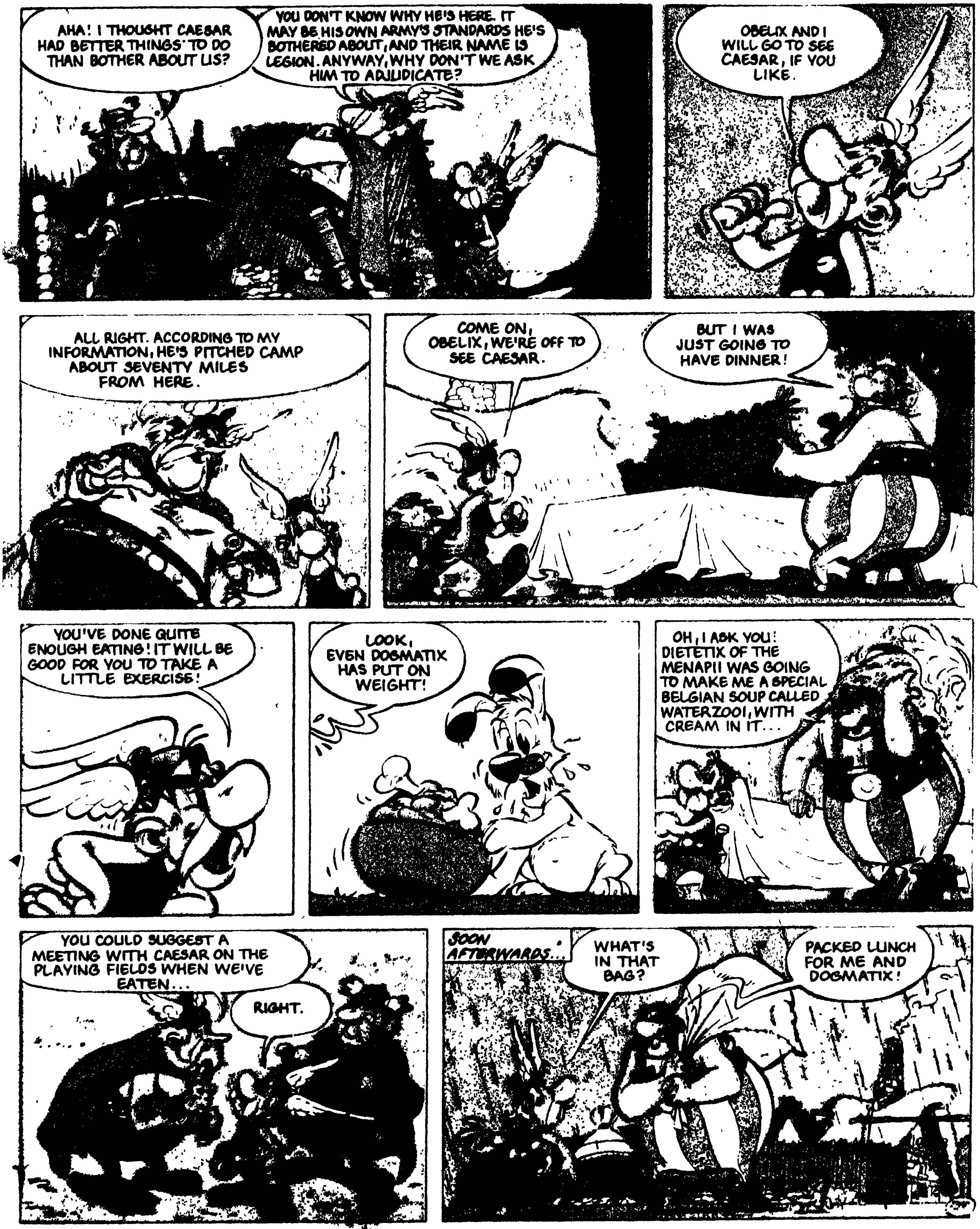

WE'VE BEEN HERE AT A LOOSE END FOR DAYS! THERE'S NO NEWS OF CAESAR, BEEFIX AND BRAWNIX AND THEIR FRIENDS KEEP NEEDLING US, AND THEY SAY NO ONE EVEN NOTICED OUR BRILLIANT ACHIEVEMENTS!
SUPPOSE WE GO HOME? IT'S NEARLY THE MUSHROOM AND TRUFFLE SEASON.
TRUFFLES ARE TRIFLES COMPARED TO OUR MILITARY REPUTATION!!!
HULLO, STILL CROSS, ARMORICAN, OLD FRIEND?
I'M IN NO JOKING MOOD!
WELL, IT'S NOT OUR FAULT IF CAESAR HAS MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO THAN BOTHER ABOUT YOU LOT, IS IT?
IT SHOWS HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT MILITARY STANDARDS!
27A


A MAN WHO SAYS WE'RE THE BRAVEST IS A REAL EXPERT WHEN IT COMES TO JUDGING MILITARY STANDARDS, YOU HEAR ME?
RIGHT, WHY DON'T WE FIGHT EACH OTHER INSTEAD OF THUMPING IGNORANT ROMANS WHO DON'T EVEN KNOW A BRAVE MAN WHEN THEY SEE ONE? THEN WE'LL FIND OUT WHO'S THE BRAVEST!
NOT A BAD IDEA, AS YOUR IDEAS GO!
CALM DOWN.
Julius Caesar has arrived in Belgium.
?
?
?
To be precise Culius Jaesar has arrived in Gelbium.
27B


AHA! I THOUGHT CAESAR HAD BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN BOTHER ABOUT US?
YOU DON'T KNOW WHY HE'S HERE. IT MAY BE HIS OWN ARMY'S STANDARDS HE'S BOTHERED ABOUT, AND THEIR NAME IS LEGION. ANYWAY, WHY DON'T WE ASK HIM TO ADJUDICATE?
OBELIX AND I WILL GO TO SEE CAESAR, IF YOU LIKE.
ALL RIGHT. ACCORDING TO MY INFORMATION, HE'S PITCHED CAMP ABOUT SEVENTY MILES FROM HERE.
COME ON, OBELIX, WE'RE OFF TO SEE CAESAR.
BUT I WAS JUST GOING TO HAVE DINNER!
YOU'VE DONE QUITE ENOUGH EATING! IT WILL BE GOOD FOR YOU TO TAKE A LITTLE EXERCISE!
LOOK, EVEN DOGMATIX HAS PUT ON WEIGHT!
OH, I ASK YOU! DIETETIX OF THE MENAPII WAS GOING TO MAKE ME A SPECIAL BELGIAN SOUP CALLED WATERZOOI, WITH CREAM IN IT...
YOU COULD SUGGEST A MEETING WITH CAESAR ON THE PLAYING FIELDS WHEN WE'VE EATEN...
RIGHT.
SOON AFTERWARDS...
WHAT'S IN THAT BAG?
PACKED LUNCH FOR ME AND DOGMATIX!

"Destroy Libya!"

That was the Israeli gut reaction when they found that a nuclear bomb was ticking away under New York, waiting to go off if Isreal did not give up all occupied Arab territories in a day. Meanwhile, a terrified White House began counting how many might perish if the bomb went off: a colossal 6.74 million! In this instalment from *The Fifth Horseman* authors Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre (who wrote *Freedom at Midnight*) continue their imaginary story based on Arab-Israeli tensions. The book has been brought out in India by Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd and is priced at Rs 60.

THE only sound reaching Muammar Kadhafi's ears was the low and mournful sigh of a distant wind. No tele-printer's hum, no radio's crackle, no jangling telephone marred the perfect quiet of his desert.

As was only natural, he had chosen to pass the critical hours preceding the test of his Hydrogen Bomb in the solitude of the spaces in which he'd found his faith and nurtured his dreams

There were no television screens here parading the world before his eyes, no smartly uniformed aides laying out the options available to him, no blinking panels of light to remind him of the strength of his massed armies.

Kadhafi was alone with the oneness of the desert and the stillness of his soul. He was a son of the desert. He had entered the world in a goat-skin tent similar to the one in which he had just passed the night. His birth had been heralded by the rumble of the artillery duel fought that evening between the gunners of Rommel's Afrika Korps and Montgomery's Eighth Army.

He had spent his boyhood wandering the desert with his tribe, maturing to the searing gusts of the siroccos, the blessings of the winter rains, the quick flowering of the pastures. From the sand seas below Cyrenaica south-west to the palm trees of Fezzan, there was not a prickly bush, a sweep of grass or a dried-out river bed that had escaped his predator's gaze in the nomad's quest for pasturage for his flock.

Regularly, when he felt overwhelmed by the frustrations and disappointments of the power that was now his, he retreated back here to his desert to immerse himself again in the well-spring of his being.

It was here, to this encampment, that one year before, Whalid Dajani had delivered the documents that had made his desert experiment possible. They were a set of computer print-outs stolen from the body of a murdered French scientist, a seemingly meaningless stream of numbers and interrelationships.

They chartered the course of an experiment that had fevered scientists' imaginations since the English astro-physicists at the Cavendish Laboratories in the 30's had first dreamed of harnessing the unaccountable energy release of the sun and the stars to Man's needs.

The goal they sought was called fusion, a process which would, when it was finally realised, mean that water would become a source of energy to light the lamps of Mankind and end Man's energy problem for as long as his planet would endure. In the US, the USSR, the UK, France, Italy and Japan men had pursued that dream for two decades.

The stolen French papers involved an effort to use the power of the laser beam in the experiment, to force the explosion of a bubble of liquid the size of a pinhead. The figures they contained represented the dark underside of the dream of fusion, a kind of Faustian compact the researchers pursuing it had to strike with the capricious gods of science.

For, frozen into the endless rows of figures on the computer print-out charting the bubble's explosion was the secret of the hydrogen bomb Harold Agnew had explained to the NSC conference, in Washington.

Immersed now in the reassuring familiarity of his desert, Kadhafi awaited the results of his test in perfect calm. If it had worked, it was now, he reasoned, in their first flash of anger, that the Americans would lash out against him.

If that was God's will, then he was ready to perish here in the surroundings that had formed him. If it had failed, he would have one course open: he would condemn the "plot" fomented within his borders, arrest a few Palestinians and stage a mock trial to mollify the anger of the Americans and the world.

His alert ears picked up the flutter of a helicopter coming to announce the result, to return him to his capital in triumph or shame. With the stoicism and self discipline that had been the guarantors of his forbears' survival, he watched unmoved as it drew up, then fluttered to rest 50 yards from his tent. A man leapt out. "Ya sidi!" he shouted. "It worked!"

Kadhafi unrolled a worn prayer rug on the sands before him. His first reaction to the news was to bow his head in prayer, a prayer of awe and gratitude for the power that now rested in his hands.

Rising, he turned to the pilot. "At last," he said, "I shall no longer have to endure the shame of being an Arab president who stands by while my Palestinian brothers are stripped of the last shreds of their homeland." Then he boarded the helicopter to begin the most colossal blackmail attempt of all time.

THE President of the United States sat motionless at the conference table in the National Military Command Centre, every fibre of his being concentrated on the dilemma before him.

"The first thing I would like to say," he announced, finally breaking the silence that had followed Kadhafi's successful test, "is that we must not give in to this threat. We will destroy the basis of international order if we do. All our actions must now be based on the assumption that he has somehow managed to hide a Hydrogen bomb in New York."

The President continued: "And we have also got to assume that Kadhafi is deadly serious when he threatens to detonate it if any word of it gets to the public.”

In a strange way, the President thought, he may have done us a service. If word of this ever got out, we’d probably have an outburst of public opinion that would close down every option we have except forcing the Israelis out of the West Bank.

“Mr President!” The words, in a hoarse, exasperated bark, came from Delbert Crandell, the Secretary of Energy. “Why are we sitting here talking? Lather those bastards from one end of Libya to the other. That’s all. Wipe them out. Lay the Trident missiles on the subs we have on patrol in the Med. on them. That’ll turn the damn place into a sea of glass in 30 seconds. There won’t be a goat left alive over there.”

Crandell sank back, satisfied. His words had a cathartic effect on the room. It was as though the outspoken Energy Secretary had given voice to a thought all had had but no one else had been prepared to express, the brutal, but reassuring affirmation that, in the final analysis, the United States possessed the power to squash a menace such as this.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANUP RAY

“Mr Christopher.” The President’s tone was soft, sad almost as he addressed the Deputy Secretary of State. “What is the population of Libya?”

“Two million, Sir, give or take a hundred thousand. Census figures over there aren’t very reliable.”

The President turned down the table towards the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. “Harry, how many people would we lose if a three megaton device went off in New York? Without evacuation?”

“Sir, it would be difficult to give you an accurate figure on that without looking at some numbers.”

“I realize that but give me your best estimate.”

The Chairmans reflected a movement. “Between four and five million, Sir.”

There was dead silence as the awful mathematics of the Chairman’s figures registered on everyone in the room. The giants of the world. The United States and the USSR held each other in strategic checkmate because they shared a parity of horror, an equilibrium once described with almost too perfect irony by the acronym for the philosophy on which the US’s thermonuclear strategy had been based –MAD—for“Mutual Assured Destruction.” I kill you, you kill me. It was the old Russian comedy, everybody dies.

But this, if it were true, was the terrible alteration in the rules of the game that had haunted responsible world leaders for years, the end game in the struggle against nuclear proliferation for which the President had fought so hard—and with so little success.

He turned abruptly to the Admiral commanding the Centre and ordered an appraisal of the military situation and the options open to the U. S. Armed Forces.

Harold Brown, the Secretary of Defence, intervened.

“Mr President, I would suggest our first action should be to alert the Soviets to what has happened. However strained our relations are, I think that in this we can count on their help in bringing Kadhafi to ground. Furthermore, they should be made aware that any military moves we make are not being directed against them.”

The President agreed. “Open up the Red Line,” he commanded his National Security Assistant, Jack Eastman, “and inform the Soviets I’d like to speak with the Chairman.”

“Sir,” Warren Christopher, the Deputy Secretary of State said, “I think it’s also essential we co-ordinate any actions we take with our Allies and keep them imformed of this at the highest level.

“I’d like authorisation to get off

It's a steal!

"I tell you it's been stolen!" roared MacDuff, two pin-points of crimson appearing high on his cheeks. "What do you mean am I sure. Of course I'm sure! Sure as I've got a hundred and ninety-three pounds and forty-seven pence in my wallet right now. And I don't want you airport blokes on this. Get me Scotland Yard."

* * *

The inspector at Scotland Yard coughed politely. "If I may re-create the events leading up to the 'crime' sir. You arrived at the airport well in advance, before the departure time of your flight. You had at that time, five pieces of luggage: three suitcases, one 'carry-on' as you call it, and a bagpipe case ..."

"And it was my VIP suitcase that was missing!" boomed MacDuff. "One moment it was there ... and the next ..." MacDuff took out his hip-flask, the one with the built-in dropper and carefully measured out a tot. "Get me an artist. I shall describe my VIP suitcase in every little detail ..."

"... That will help, sir."

* * *

"She's a little beauty" said MacDuff, a glazed look coming into his eyes. "All twenty-four inches of her. With a fine all-over tan. Smooth, smooth contours. Slim lines. Handsome body ..."

"Your girlfriend, eh, sir?" said the artist, grinning.

"Never say die, laddie. Remember, if nothing else, it will cost a few breaths."

"Och, it's one of my VIP suitcases, you young whippersnapper! And ruddy good they make them too. Been all over the world with them ... I tell you, I'm getting my money's worth. And that's why, I've got to have my suitcase back!" exploded MacDuff.

MacDuff was pacified by the inspector, who convinced him to relax and go back to his country house. "You'll have to sign some papers before leaving. A formality, sir. And I assure you, we're doing our very best."

* * *

Back at home, MacDuff was on the qui vive. He just didn't know what to do. He couldn't even pace up and down, for fear of wearing out the flagstones. Then he remembered what his father, the grand Elshender, used to say. "Never say die, laddie. Remember, if nothing else, it will cost a few breaths." And he felt better.

The door opened after a polite knock and in walked the inspector, unannounced.

"I think we have found your suitcase, sir. Is this it?"

An officer followed, wheeling ... yes, that was it! MacDuff would know it anywhere.

"But how did you find it so soon" said MacDuff, pouncing on it. "And did you catch the thief?"

The inspector inspected the tips of his patent leather shoes. "There was no 'thief', sir. Certain things led me to believe you are, well, preoccupied, shall we say, and the fact is, sir, that you had never taken your VIP suitcase to the airport. I have taken the liberty of breaking in and rummaging through your house, sir. Your suitcase was in the luggage room."

"But ... but how ...?"

"When you signed the papers, sir, at the Yard, you forgot to put the cap back on your pen. The ink stained your shirt, sir. So I knew you were" cough cough ... "forgetful."

"My laundry bill!" moaned MacDuff.

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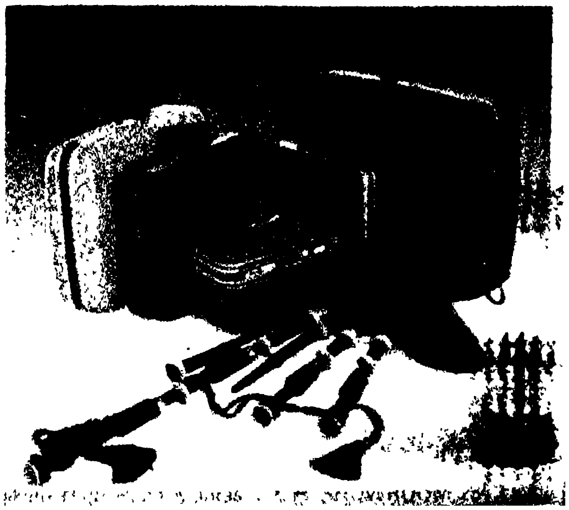
MacDuff in a more relaxed mood, photographed at the grounds surrounding his country home.



'Eyes only' messages to Mrs Thatcher, Helmut Schmidt and, above all, President Giscard. We've got to assume the source of Kadhafi's plutonium for the atomic trigger of that hydrogen bomb was his French reactor. The French may be able to turn up information for us on the people Kadhafi's involved in this that will help the F. B. I. run them down."

The President gave his approval, then ordered the Admiral to resume his briefing. This time a series of bright red lights on the semi-darkened screen indicated the position of every ship of the sixth Fleet, most of them gathered off Crete on an antisubmarine warfare exercise.

Harry Fuller, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, broke in. "Mr President, I think there's one point that needs to be clarified right away. There is no viable military solution to this crisis. Sure, we can destroy Libya. Instantly. But that's not going to give us any guarantee whatsoever that his bomb—if it's in New York—won't explode. And that, in my judgment, precludes our taking any military action against Kadhafi for the time being."

"I'm afraid I have to agree with that," the President noted grimly glancing down the table to Crandell. "What do you recommend we do then?"

"Every move we make," the Admiral declared in a voice that boomed through the room like a Navy klaxon sounding General Quarters, "had got to be designed to remind Kadhafi of the potential consequences of his action. He's got to be kept aware every hour, every minute, every second of this damn crisis that we can thermonuclearise him in the blink of an eye. Let him live, eat and breathe that and see how he likes it."

The Admiral waved a hand at the red lights flashing on the screen. "Send the Sixth Fleet hell for leather for the Libyan coast. Once they get there, I'd put them right up against his coastline where his radar's sure to pick them up.

"Run a high altitude aerial screen up and down the coastline from the carriers and tell the pilots to talk in the clear so he's constantly reminded they're carrying enough missiles to turn that Goddam country of his into instant ruin."

A dour smile appeared on the Admiral's face. "The deployment of force in a situation like this is designed to alter your enemy's perception of his actions. Maybe this will alter his."

"Mr President," there it was again, that rasping drawl of Crandell's. "You're not going to like what I'm going to say but I'm going to say it anyway. Destroy Kadhafi. Right now."

The Chief Executive gave his Energy Secretary a look of ill-concealed exasperation. It did nothing to staunch the flow of his unsolicited advice.

"The great mistake we made in Iran was not acting the very first day they took those hostages. The whole world would have understood us if we had.. We waited and what happened? Everybody was holding us by the coattails. 'Don't do anything rash. Think about our oil. Think about the Russians'."

> **"At last, I shall no longer have to endure the shame of being an Arab president who stands by while my Palestinian brothers are stripped of the last shred of their homeland."**

"Mr Crandell, we're not talking about 50 hostages in an embassy." The President almost spat the words at his Energy Secretary. Despite the placid surface he turned to the public. He was in private, a man of considerable temper, capable, when angered, of lacerating meanness. "We're talking about five million people and New York City."

"We're talking about this country, Mr President, and a man who's declared war on us. We've got to show him and everybody else on this globe that there's a limit beyond which we aren't going to be pushed. Mark my words, if you don't respond to this man, challenge right now, tell him he's got five minutes to tell you where that bomb's hidden or he and his country are dead," Crandell was waving a pudgy finger across the table, "then before this night is over you'll be ready to betray this nation's friends to satisfy a blackmatter."

"Crandell," the President had paled under his efforts to rein in his temper, "when I want military advice from you I'll call for it. I'm not going to put the lives of five million of our people at risk until I've exhausted every possible avenue of saving them and this world from an unspeakable catastrophe."

"By talking Mr President and once you've started talking you'll start compromising."

At the far end of the table, Bennington had just picked up his telephone. The CIA chief listened for a moment.

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"Excuse me, Sir," he said to the President, "but it looks like we've got another problem on our hands. Mossad's just got onto the agency. The Israelis picked up the explosion on their seismographs. They're very suspicious that it was a nuclear shot and want to know what we've got on it."

"Christ!" someone groaned from the end of the table. "If they find out what Kadhafi's done, they'll take him out on their own and we may lose New York."

The President frowned. There was probably no political leader in the world he disliked quite so much Menachem Begin. Dealing with Begin had forced him to draw on reserves of patience which he'd never imagined he'd possessed. Still, Begin was a vital element in the dreadful equation before him.

"Get Mr Begin on the phone," he snapped.

THE chimes of St. John's Monastery of the Cross were tolling half past nine, Jerusalem time, when Menachem Begin's black Dodge slipped below the Knesset, Israel's Parliament, and up to the unattractive, functional building that housed the centre of the nation's government.

Begin nodded courteously to the elderly Arab peasants in black robes and white kaffiyehs waiting to enter the building's basement where the archives of a long-vanished Palestine, the Palestine of the Ottoman Turks in which most of them had been born, were stored.

A few minutes later, he took his place at the centre of the oval table at which his Cabinet was gathered in emergency session. None of the men at the table had even the faintest intimation of the nature of the emergency that had brought them there. Begin had confided in no one. For a moment his regard swept the room, his dark eyes rendered outsized by the glasses he wore to correct his astigmatic vision. Carefully choosing his words, he began.

"Gentlemen, we are facing the gravest crisis in our history." With the phenomenal memory for which he was noted, he recollected every detail of his conversation with the President.

Nothing Begin could have told his Ministers, no revelation he might have made could have horrified them more than his words. For 15 years their nation's survival had reposed on two strategic pillars, the support of the United States and the knowledge that in the ultimate crisis, Israel alone in the Middle East possessed atomic weapons. Now, the image of a mushroom cloud rising above the Libyan desert had destroyed the strategic basis of their state.

"We have no choice!"

The words thundered through the stricken silence left by Begin's speech, their impact underscored by the sound of a heavy fist smashing on to the Ministerial table. They came from a barrel-chested man in an old sweater

"(If Kadhafi manages to detonate the bomb) that would be a tragedy. An appalling, ghastly tragedy. But it's a risk we're forced to take. What would be a greater tragedy—the destruction of New York or the destruction of our (Israeli) nation?"

and open shirt, his suntanned face setting off a full head of pure white hairs.

"We can't live with a madman pointing a thermo-nuclear gut at our heads."

Benny Ranan was one of the five authentic military heroes in the room, a former paratrooper general who'd jumped at the head of his troops in the 1973 war. He rose and strode around the table with the swaying gait his paratroopers loved to mimic.

His destination was the mural covering one wall of the room, a photograph of the Middle East taken by Walter Schirra from his Apollo 7 spaceship. Ranan gazed at it dramatically.

"What this does is change totally the conditions of our existence. All Kadhafi has to do to destroy us is drop a bomb here..."

Ranan's thick forefinger thumped the map in the vicinity of Tel Aviv "and here—and here. Three bombs and this nation will cease to exist."

He turned back to his fellow ministers. The booming parade-ground voice dropped in register to a hoarse whisper. "What would our life be worth here knowing that at any second, any minute, any hour, a fanatic who's been screaming for our blood for years can incinerate us instantly? I couldn't live like that. Could any of you? Could anybody?"

He paused, aware of the impact his words were having on the men in the room. "We have to destroy him, gentlemen. Right now. Before the sun is high."

Ranan placed his forearms on the table so that his heavy trunk leaned forward and the lingering smell of the garlic and cheese of his breakfast hung on the air. "And we will tell the Americans what we intend to do once we've done it."

Again, quiet muffled the room. The Deputy Prime Minister thoughtfully lit his pipe. Yigal Yadin's bushy moustache, his bald head were as much a part of Israel's political scene as Ranan's bulky figure. He was an archaeologist, a humanistic warrior who was the architect of Israel's victory in the first war with her Arab neighbours in 1948.

"For the moment, Benny," he noted, "the people who are menaced by Kadhafi's bomb are not here. They're in New York."

"That doesn't matter. What matters is destroying Kadhafi before he can react. The Americans will thank us for doing it."

"And suppose Kadhafi still manages to detonate that bomb and destroy New York? How much gratitude do you suppose that will inspire in the Americans?"

Ranan sighed. "That would be a tragedy. An appalling, ghastly tragedy. But it's a risk we're forced to take. What would be a greater tragedy—the destruction of New York or the destruction of our nation?"

"For whom, Benny? Yadin asked. "Us or the Americans?"

Benny" the Prime Minister noted, "I must remind you the Americans have asked us to avoid taking any unilateral action against Kadhafi."

"The Americans?" Ranan gave a growing, scornful laugh. "Let me tell you something, the Americans are going to sell us out. That's what they're going to do." His hand waved towards a bank of black telephones in one corner of the room. "They're on the phone trying to talk to Kadhafi right now. Dealing away our land, our people, behind our backs."

"And suppose we do negotiate over those settlements?"

Those words from the mouth of General Avidar stunned the room. At the head of his tank battalion in 1967 he had defeated the Arab Legion in the crucial battle for the West Bank. "Giving them up won't mean the end of Israel. Most of the people in this country didn't want them there in the first place."

"What at stake is not those settlements," Ranan's answering voice was deep and controlled. "Or New York. It's whether this nation can exist beside a Muammar Kadhafi armed with thermonuclear weapons. I say it cannot. We have to act right now, before the world can organise to stop us.

"If we wait we'll have no West Bank, no Jerusalem, Yassir Arafat and his thugs on our doorstep, our hands tied behind our backs by the Americans and Kadhafi poised to slaughter us. We will have no more will or reason to exist."

Menachem Begin had followed the argument without intervening, anxious to let every opinion enter into the debate. Now, softly, he spoke to his Defence Minister. "Does this nation have any military option to stop Kadhafi other than an all-out, pre-emptive nuclear attack on Libya?"

The burly ex-fighter pilot who was the architect of Israel's Air Force slowly despairingly almost, moved his head from side to side. "I can see none. We have no resources to mount and sustain an attack across hundreds of miles of open water."

Begin glanced at his hands, folded on the table before him. "I have lived through one holocaust. I cannot live under the threat of another. I believe we have no choice. I pray God, the bomb in New York doesn't explode."

"Good God!" General Avidar gasped. "We won't have a friend left in the world."

Begin's face was set in a tragic, melancholy mask. "We have no friends now. We never have. From Pharaoh to Hilter we have been a people condemned by God and history to dwell alone."

He called for a vote. Scanning the raised hands, he remembered the May afternoon in 1948 when the leaders of the Jewish people had decided to proclaim their state—by just one vote. That was the margin before him—one vote. He turned to General Dorit. "Destroy Libya," he ordered.

No people in the world are better trained or better equipped to move fast in a crisis than the Israelis. Speed of reaction is a life or death reflex in a nation whose principal city can count on only two minutes' warning of an enemy attack from its northern borders, five minutes from the south.

Twenty minutes after Begin had given his order, his generals had planned the first pre-emptive nuclear attack in history. Its code name was "Operation Maspha" for the Biblical site where the thunder of Yahweh had routed the Philistines.

MENACHEM BEGIN removed his steel-rimmed glasses. He lowered his head into the cradle of his left hand, slowly massaging his bushy eyebrows with his thumb and middle finger. There was a world of agony in that simple gesture, the reflection of a weariness so crushing that Israel's Prime Minister felt numb.

How had they found out, he wondered. Since 1973, every detail of Israel's nuclear strategy had been reviewed, pondered again and again, to be sure that no revealing detail of a coming attack could be picked up by a passing satellite, that no compromising communication could be intercepted by electronic surveillance. Yet, two minutes ago, he had received a phone call from the French Ambassador. His voice hesitant with concern, the Frenchman had relayed the threat from the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; if Israel went through with her nuclear strike against Libya, Soviet rockets would instantly annihilate their nation.

Were the Soviets bluffing? Were they just rattling their rockets the way Krushchev had done at Suez? Did he have the right to risk the nation's existence on the possibility they were?

He got up and walked to the window. Pale and trembling, the "Polish gentleman," as he was often described, studied the ageless sweep of the Judean hills, the monuments of modern Israel, the Knesset, the Hebrew University, the Israel Museum sparkling in the sunshine.

On a rise just beyond his line of vision was the one which meant more to Begin than any of the others, the white marble canopy of a "Tent of Remembrance" under which burned an eternal flame in memory of the six million victims of the holocaust—and most of his own family.

Begin had sworn on the altar of those six million dead that never again would his people live another holocaust. Would they if he went through with this? The Soviet threat was so devastatingly simple and direct. Yet Ranan was right. How could Israel exist constantly menaced with destruction at Kadhafi's hands?

Everything had depended on speed, on annihilating Libya and explaining why afterwards. In the terrible chess game of global terror, there was only one move left that could check the Russians now and it was the Americans who had to play it. Their counterthreat might stay the Russians' hand.

But, Begin asked himself, were the Americans going to risk that when they discovered he'd acted on his own, that he had not hesitated to imperil the city of New York to save his nation?

In a flash, Begin understood. The Russian hadn't found out. No one had. The Americans hadn't trusted them, so they had turned to the Soviets.

"LET'S get going." David Hannon, a Pentagon expert on the effects of thermonuclear weapons recognised the familiar face of the President's NSC adviser, Jack Eastman. He self-consciously touched his wavy, white hair to make sure it was in place and gave a nervous tug of his striped tie.

"Sir, in New York with a three megaton thermonuclear explosion we've got a situation that is unique in the world. All those tall buildings. The thrust of our studies has always been what we can do to the Soviets, not what they can do to us. And since they don't have any tall buildings, this is a circumstance where the data run out, so to speak."

Little dew balls of sweat began to gleam on Hannon's head. "The fact of the matter is we just can't say with total precision what this weapon is going to do to Manhattan. The damage would be so great. It's almost inconceivable."

Hannon rose and walked to a map of the New York area. A series of concentric circles, blue, red, green and black moved out from the narrow pencil of Manhattan Island at its centre.

"What we've done is work out here our best estimate of the destruction this would cause, based on our computer calculations. Since we don't know exactly where this device is, we've assumed for the purpose of our study that it's here." His finger indicated Times Square. "In that case, the blue circle represents Zone 'A' from Ground Zero out to three miles."

He moved his finger along its circumference down Lower Manhattan in the South, through Green Point in Brooklyn, across Upper Manhattan at 96th Street and, west of the Hudson, around Union City, Hoboken and parts of Jersy City. "Nothing inside this circle is going to survive on any recognisable form."

"Nothing?" the President asked, incredulous. "Nothing at all?"

"Nothing, Sir.The devastation will be total.

"With the winds this is going to produce, you're going to have skyscrapers literally flying all over the landscape. Disintegrating in seconds. They'll blow away like Long Island beach huts in a hurricane."

Hannon turned to his audience again. He was so controlled and composed he might have been addressing a class at the War College. "If this really goes off, gentlemen, all that will be left of Manhattan Island as we know it today is a smouldering pile of debris."

For seconds, the men at the table struggled to digest the enormity of Hannon's words.

"How about survivors in the area?" Abe Stern, the Mayor of New York asked, nodding towards the blue circle inside which were trapped, at that very moment, parhaps five million people.

"Survivors? In there?" Hannon gave the mayor a look of total incredulity. "There won't be any."

"Good God!" Stern gasped. For an instant he looked as though he was going to suffer a stroke.

"And fire?" asked Harold Brown, the Secretary of Defence.

"The fire this will create," Hannon replied, "will be unlike anything in human experience. If this device explodes, it's going to release a heat burst that'll set houses on fire all over Westchester County, New Jersey and Long Island.

"You'll have tens, hundreds of thousands of wooden houses bursting into flames like matches exploding."

Hannon glanced at his map. "Inside the first circle, what will happen first is the thermal pulse, the heat of the fireball, will be passed little diminished through the glass sheaths of all those modern buildings in the centre of Manhattan.

"Now, when you look inside those glass skycrapers, what do you see? Curtains. Rugs. Desks covered with paper. In other words, fuel. What will happen is, you'll have a million fires lit instantly on Park Avenue. Then, of course, the blast will hit and turn the place into piles of smoking rubbish."

"Christ!" one of the deputies along the conference room wall said. "Imagine those poor people in those glass buildings!"

"Actually," Hannon replied, "according to our calculations, glass buildings may turn out to be less dangerous than you'd imagine provided, of course, they're well away from the shot.

"At the enormous pressures those things generate, those glass structures are going to fragment into millions of tiny pieces which are not going to have a high degree of penetration. I mean, they'll make you look like a pincushion, but they won't kill you."

"We'll begin having survivors, Hannon continued, "inside the second circle, three to six miles from ground zero. He mechanically ran his finger along the circle's red circumference encompassing the guts of the most important metropolitan area in the world. Fifty per cent of the population in this area will be killed Forty per cent will be injured. Ten per cent will survive."

"Do you mean to tell me only one New Yorker in ten there is going to come out unscathed?" the President asked. "Half of them are going to die?"

" Yes, Sir."

"What about the impact of this on your other areas?" the President queried.

"Most of Jersy City, Upper Manhattan and Flatbush are just going to fall over. Low rise buildings will collapse Anything under 10 stories will come down."

"How about the fall-out?" the President queried.

"God forbid, Sir, if there is an onshore wind blowing when this thing explodes to drive the fall-out up into New York State and New England, it'll contaminate a swathe of land thousands of miles square. Right up into Vermont. Nobody will be able to live there for generations to come."

"Look, Mr Whatever-your name-is," Abe Stern had begun to recover his composure. "I'd like to know one thing from you. God forgive me for using the expression for something like this, but I want the bottom line. How many of my people are going to be killed if this thing goes off?"

"The total dead, Sir, for the conditions we've been given in the five boroughs and New Jersey would be 6.74 million." ■

"God forbid, Sir, if there is an onshore wind blowing when this thing explodes to drive the fall-out up into New York State and New England, it'll contaminate a swathe of land thousands of miles square. Right up into Vermont. Nobody will be able to live there for generations to come."

THE WORLD

PLO's passage to America

Leopold Sedar Senghor

Leopold Sedar Senghor (74), ex-President of Senegal, has accepted the role of intermediary between the USA and the PLO at the latter's request. Under Mr Senghor, Senegal was the first black African country to recognise the PLO. He will carry what Arafat wants conveyed to President Reagan who has publicly condemned the PLO as a terrorist organisation.

Yasser Arafat

Khomeini hits out—again

Ayatollah Khomeini reacted angrily to the attempt by the high-powered 12-member Islamic team to bring peace to Iran and Iraq. The mission, which was set up during the Islamic summit in January in Saudi Arabia, included such luminaries as the Presidents of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Guinea, and the Prime Minister of Turkey. On the eve of the mission's departure from Tehran on 1 March, after several rounds of talks, Khomeini went on the air to criticise its priorities. He urged the members of the mission to "bring the aggressor (Iraq) to trial, punish the aggressor and send away those who trespass in our country;" he also asked them to "give up hollow words" and to openly condemn the Iraqi government under President Saddam Hussein. Addressing the delegates he said, "You and the other people who were at the Taif conference listened to Saddam's ...nonsense words for 80 minutes while his army was killing our people inside our country." He ended his tirade with an impassioned question: "He (President Hussein) said Iran was the aggressor and you did not ask him 'How come Iran could be the aggressor?' Are we fighting inside Iraqi territory?"

Ayatollah Khomeini

Mini-TV

Clive Sinclair of Sinclair Research Laboratories (Cambridge), exhibited a prototype of his pocket TV in London recently. The tiny set has a flat picture tube and an incorporated FM radio. It is expected to go into production next year at a new factory in Dundee (Scotland) and will sell for £ 50.

Swiss sex

In the last week of February, it was sex which figured prominently in the Swiss press. This followed the recommendations of a group which was set up to suggest changes in the Swiss penal code. Child psychologists and church groups have been outraged by the recommendation to provide legislation for sex at the age of 14, incest between brothers and sisters and parent and adult child, prostitution, homosexuality, adultery and "erotic centres."

Briefly

Harvard is anti-racist

Harvard University, maintaining its stand against apartheid in South Africa, has sold its investments of nearly $50 million in Citibank, because of Citibank's favourable policy towards South Africa.

Japan needs Iran

Japan will resume importing Iranian oil sometime this month; four per cent of its total crude imports (180,000 barrels a day) will once again be supplied by Iran, after a ten-month suspension which was prompted by the US hostages issue.

Chrysler suffers

Chrysler, the US company famous for its Dodge cars, suffered a loss of $1.7 billion in 1980, according to the statement issued recently by the company. This was the biggest annual loss in American corporate history.

Afghanistan dropped

Afghanistan's membership to the Islamic Development Bank was suspended after a decision taken by the bank's governors in Khartoum recently.

New galaxies

Three US scientists from California and Arizona have sighted new galaxies, some ten billion light years away from the earth; this report appeared in the 2 March issue of the American *Astrophysics Journal.*

Brezhnev's family plan

Soviet President Brezhnev's son, first deputy foreign trade minister Yuri Brezhnev, has got a promotion: at a recent meeting of the central committee of the Soviet Communist Party, he was voted into the committee, though with the junior rank of an alternative member. President Brezhnev's son-in-law and number two man in the KGB, General Semen Tsvigun, was also given a promotion—from alternate to full member of the committee.

Leonid Brezhnev

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ur signature
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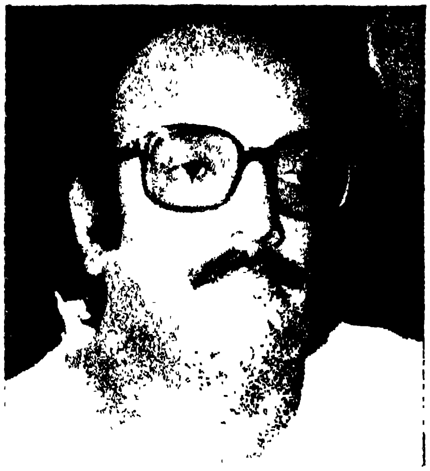
Mayfair Suitings

The woes of a lonely Congress(I) chief minister

Jagannath Pahadia inducts new cabinet members but the infighting continues.



N. S. Bhatti

Jaipur: This is going to be Rajasthan's summer of discontent—politically—for the ruling Congress(I). The infighting within the ruling party which had hitherto been kept behind "closed doors" has burst out into the open—much to the discomfiture of the state chief minister Jagannath Pahadia. Mr Pahadia is convinced that he has only one loyal supporter within the Congress(I) and that is Jagannath Pahadia. If he had any doubts regarding the loyalty of his only supporter, the proceedings within the Vidhan Sabha on 27 February only underlined the fact that he was not only alone but was also a viciously-cornered man.

On 27 February there was turmoil in the House after the opposition parties and members of the press boycotted the day's proceedings in protest against the government's partisan handling of the beating up of pressmen during the Weir by-election on 23 November 1980, in which the CM was himself a candidate. What followed was unprecedented: as MLA after MLA shot volleys of allegations against the CM complaining of maladministration, non-governance, etc, Mr Pahadia found he had nothing to say. And what was even more amazing was that none of his cabinet members spoke a word on his or the government's behalf. It was for the first time in the history of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha that the chief minister was not permitted to complete his reply in the debate on the motion of thanks to the Governor by his own partymen. The speaker attempted to calm the members but he was unsuccessful and remained a silent spectator to the CM's humiliation. Even the chief whip of the party tried to pacify the agitated members but he was virtually shouted down. The Congress(I) members' united protest against their own government was due to maladministration, nepotism, inadequate famine relief, the power crisis, stoppage of development work, shortage of essential commodities and the deteriorating law and order situation.

These factors coupled with many others had, immediately after Sanjay Gandhi's death, virtually numbered the days of the shaky Pahadia ministry. But Mr Pahadia saved his *gaddi* and his ministry by making a quick about-turn. He shook hands with Narendra Singh Bhatti, deputy minister in the Rajasthan government and an old friend of Mr Rajiv Gandhi. Although Mr Bhatti was inducted in the cabinet as early as June 1980, he remains the only deputy minister who has not been allotted any portfolio. When Mr Bhatti sued Mrs Maneka Gandhi in a defamation suit on 24 January (*Sunday* 11 January 1981), the Rajasthan CM thought it was the opportunity to ease him out of the cabinet. Mr Pahadia sent some of his deputy ministers to convince Mrs Gandhi that Mr Bhatti was not needed in the cabinet anymore. But the Prime Minister disappointed them when she firmly put her foot down on the demand for the ouster. And a few days later Mrs Gandhi along with Mr Rajiv Gandhi and his wife, Sonia, visited Jaisalmer. Mr Gandhi refused to accept government hospitality and went sight-seeing in a car driven by none other than Mr Bhatti. At the end of the tour, Mrs Gandhi showered her affections on the sons of Mr Bhatti.

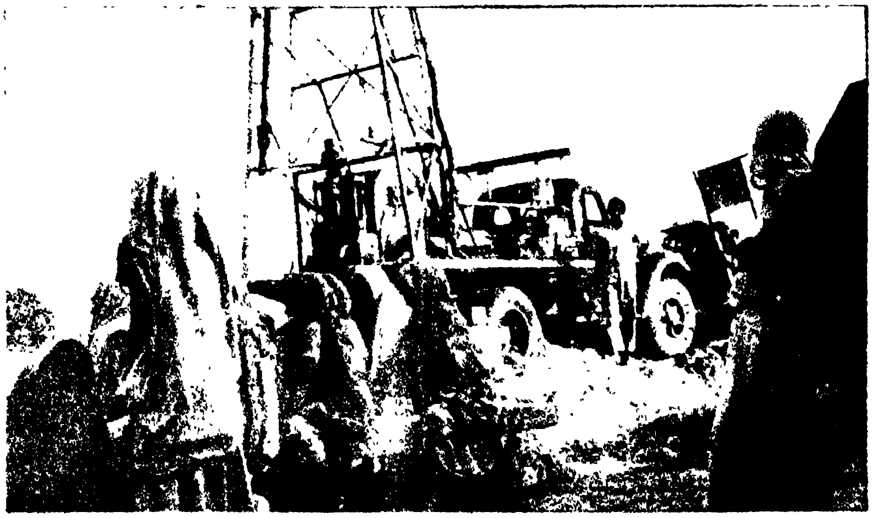
The partiality towards Mr Bhatti made the CM realise that he had indeed been thinking on different lines about him. He revised his plans and promised Mr Bhatti that he would be upgraded to cabinet rank soon. Mr Pahadia received the green signal for a cabinet expansion along with the list of new incumbents, through Bhatti. N. S. Bhatti's name was on the list. At the chief minister's invitation Bhatti reached the Raj Bhavan to be sworn in. The ceremony began and ended and to his surprise Bhatti found himself still a deputy minister. The swearing-in ceremony ended the Pahadia-Bhatti alliance abruptly.

Perhaps to smoothen out his political path, the CM has extended his hand of friendship towards a section of the Congress(I) through the former CM Mohanlal Sukhadia. He has already managed to appease the group by making two of them ministers in the nine-member cabinet expansion. Interestingly, one of them is Chand Mal Baid, whom Pahadia once wanted to expel from the party. Mr Pahadia went further: at the swearing-in ceremony he touched Mr Sukhadia's feet in public.

But touching Mr Sukhadia's feet and expanding the cabinet has had little impact on the unity of the party. The Congress(I) legislature party continues to be a divided house. The wrangling has worsened, mostly caused by those who had been promised berths in the cabinet and subsequently left out. Muslim and Gujjar Congress (I) MLAs held meetings separately after the cabinet expansion to register their protest against inadequate representation of their communities. For the moment, no one is willing to listen to the CM and be pacified.

Milap Chand Dandia

Drought relief work in CM Pahadia's village



PRAL B. GUPTA

TRUE LOVE

It even conquers political wars

New Delhi: Mahatma Gandhi may have become irrelevant for today's politicians today, but Shakespeare certainly is not. A real-life Romeo and Juliet drama rocked the Himachal Pradesh Congress(I) in the first week of March: Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi were also, inadvertently, dragged into the drama. One senior office-bearer of the Himachal Congress(I) found himself in police custody for a few hours on charges of kidnapping the daughter of a party MP. Ultimately, our Romeo and Juliet ended their 1981 drama by being blessed by none other than the Prime Minister of India after their wedding. So there was a happy ending this time.

The drama began on 2 March, when the brother of a senior party functionary of Himachal Pradesh, accompanied by the daughter of a lady MP from that state, went to the Tis Hazari courts and filed an affidavit saying that they were both majors and intended getting married according to Hindu rites. They stated that their families were opposed to the marriage, and, therefore, the girl had run away from home. The purpose of the affidavit was that in case the girl's family complained to the police, then the police would know that she had not been abducted. The girl was a khatri and the boy a brahmin. And their respective politician kin were bitterly opposed to each other. So neither the boy nor the girl had told their relatives of their love affair.

After filing the affidavit, however, the boy went and told his brother, who was then camping in Delhi. The brother, who is young, reacted sharply to the idea, but considering the stage that the matters had reached, agreed to organise a quick wedding. The wedding was held on 2 March at the Arya Samaj Temple at Mandir Marg, according to Hindu rites, and a few young Congress(I) MPs were present on the occasion.

The lady MP learnt about her daughter's marriage a day later; and immediately raised a hue and cry. She charged her opponent (the bridegroom's father) with having kidnapped her daughter. Since the MP was friendly with the wife of Delhi's police commissioner Bhinder, the Delhi police swung into action, and around ten on the night of 4 March two jeeploads of policemen stormed the Himachal Pradesh guest house in the Kasturba Gandhi Marg apartments and arrested the young officebearer of the Himachal Congress(I). He was taken to the Tilak Marg police station and interrogated. When the facts became known, the police apologised and let him go in the early hours of 5 March.

The drama then shifted to Parliament house the next day. The girl's mother went to the PM's office in Parliament and complained to R. K. Dhawan that her political opponent had conspired to wreck her family life. The matter reached the PM and Rajiv Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi was pleased to learn that an inter-caste marraige had taken place between two people belonging to wealthy families, without any exchange of dowry. He invited the couple over to 1, Safdarjung Road, where Mrs Gandhi met and blessed them.

Our Delhi Correspondent

MADHYA PRADESH

The arrest of Shankar Niyogi

Bhopal: What began as a war of advertisements (*Sunday*, 18 January) has turned into a pitched battle between Shankar Guha Niyogi, organising secretary of the Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh of Rajahara iron ore mines of Bhilai plant in Durg district and the state government. On 11 February, Niyogi and Sahdev Sahu were invited by the state government for negotiations at Durg. No sooner had the two leaders reached Durg when they were told that they were being detained under the National Security Act (NSA).

As news of the arrest spread, 7,500 labourers of the workers'cooperative societies of Rajahara went on strike. Then began the systematic arrest of all workers violating prohibitory orders under Section 144. Workers arrested were taken to some distance and dispersed by bursting teargas shells. Events, however, took a serious turn on 15 February when Niyogi's wife, Asha, defying the ban along with a thousand labourers were picked up by the police. The trucks carrying Asha and mostly old people and children drove into the Manpur forest, notorious for its wolves. There they were left to fend for themselves. It was only the next day that these people found their way home with the help of villagers and without any food or drink.

Meanwhile, 10,000 workers and *kisans* are preparing to court arrest by defying prohibitory orders daily in batches of two hundred. Till date authorities have arrested 75 workers including two Lok Dal leaders—the president and general secretary of the Lok Dal, Purshottam Kaushik and Mahesh Tiwari. Both the leaders had gone to assess the reports of police excess and had been arrested. Even R. Kupuswamy the UNI correspondent who had accompanied the two leaders was arrested on 21 February. He was detained in spite of disclosing his identity.

What was the root of the clash between Niyogi and the state government? Apparently, the clash between the industries minister Jhumuklal Bhedia, liquor contractors and Niyogi took a serious turn when Bhedia suddenly charged his political rival, Vidhya Charan Shukla, with having joined hands with Niyogi against the industries minister. Shukla, who was at Rajahara on 18 February addressed a public meeting in which he declared that Bhedia's allegations were foolish and that only a mentally imbalanced person could make such charges. Caught in the crossfire between the two Congress(I) leaders, Niyogi had to pay with his arrest.

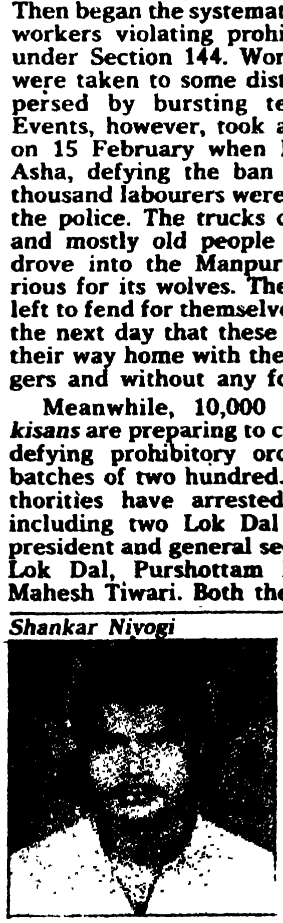
And the other side of the story? According to S. S. Porte, the collector of Durg, who had ordered the arrest of Niyogi, the arrest was made because it was being felt that his activities were destructive and violent. He and other members of his union were charged with repeatedly gheraoing of the mine's officials: In addition, the administration claims that Niyogi has been raising slogans and threatening non-Chhattisgarhis to leave Rajahara. According to the collector, there are about 30 cases registered against Niyogi, but people who have been affected by his activities are not willing to come forward as witnesses.

The state, however, still stands divided on the issue of the arrest. Political leaders have criticised the arrest. The state chief of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Kailash Thakare announced his decision to launch a *satyagraha* at Rajahara from 27 February as a protest. He was, however, dissuaded by his party members. Instead the BJP members held a public meeting at Kusumkasa to protest against the arrest. What surprised many was the fact that not only the INTUC, but the CPI-controlled AITUC and HMS and other local trade unions have been justifying Niyogi's arrest.

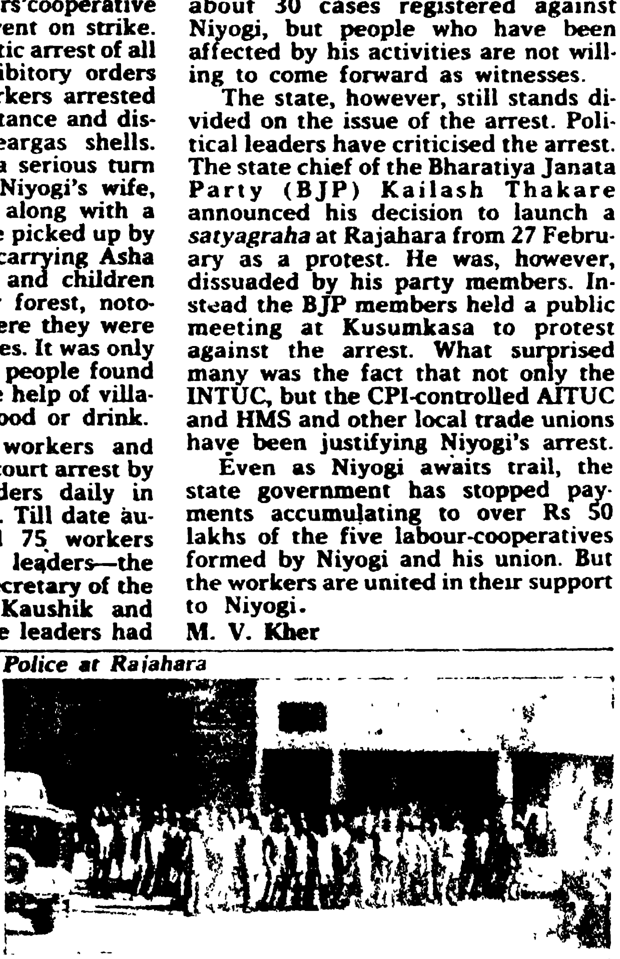
Even as Niyogi awaits trail, the state government has stopped payments accumulating to over Rs 50 lakhs of the five labour-cooperatives formed by Niyogi and his union. But the workers are united in their support to Niyogi.

M. V. Kher

Shankar Niyogi



Police at Rajahara



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STATUTORY WARNING CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

NATIONAL HOCKEY

Who represents Bhopal?

New Delhi: The rivalry between two young MPs, Gufran Azam and Kamal Nath, has even affected the 76 hockey clubs in Bhopal. The result: two rival teams turned up at the national hockey championships at Jullundur and claimed to represent Bhopal. One team owed allegiance to the Bhopal Hockey Association (BHA) led by the Nawab of Pataudi and Aftabuddin (this was recognised as the Aftabuddin group) and the other claimed to represent the Bhopal Hockey Association led by former Olympian Aslam Sher Khan and Vijay Gupta. The sympathies of Gufran Azam, himself a vice-president of the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF), are with the Aftabuddin group. Aslam Sher Khan, who had unsuccessfully contested the last Vidhan Sabha polls on a Congress(I) ticket, has the support of Kamal Nath.

On 2 March the Bhopal team sent by the BHA (Aftabuddin group) was not allowed to field a side against Himachal Pradesh at Jullundur. The IHF and the host association for this year's nationals, the Punjab Hockey Association, took one full day to settle the dispute regarding the credentials of the two rival teams claiming to represent Bhopal and it was only on 3 March that Bhopal could field a team (of the Aftabuddin group) against Rajasthan. Politicking had taken its toll. The well-trained Bhopal outfit, which has some international probables like Yusuf, Khurshid and Akbar Rafiq, managed to scrape past Rajasthan by winning 4-3. The Aslam Sher Khan group was not recognised as the official team and the IHF told the Bhopal team to reach a "compromise" formula by including some of the players of the Aslam Sher Khan group (the system of "compromise" seem confined not only to politics). But the Aslam group refused to join the Aftabuddin team, so a "pure" Aftabuddin team was fielded against Rajasthan on 3 March.

Nawab of Pataudi

The history of the present controversy in Bhopal's hockey association dates back to the pre-Assembly election period. Aslam Sher Khan wanted to contest the elections. He went to his friend and mentor Gufran Azam, MP and a former general secretary of the Indian Youth Congress for help. (Aslam Sher Khan had started playing hockey in Safia College, Bhopal, where Gufran was the teacher incharge of sports. Later Aslam played his first club hockey from Carbamets, of which Gufran is an office-bearer. Aslam later played for the Indian Airlines and represented India. He resigned from the Indian Airlines to contest the Assembly elections.) Gufran refused to help Aslam in getting a ticket. Aslam then went to Kamal Nath, who was then an all-powerful personality in the Congress (I) as Sanjay Gandhi was alive. Kamal Nath helped Aslam to get a ticket, but could not help him to win the election, which Aslam lost by a huge margin.

Aslam may have lost the elections, but the polls certainly brought him close to Kamal Nath. In turn he got alienated from Gufran. He started getting involved in the local politics of the hockey association, which is headed by the Nawab of Pataudi, Mansur Ali Khan. (The Nawab's mother is the Begum of Bhopal. And after her the Nawab's wife, Sharmila Tagore, will be the Begum of Bhopal). Aftabuddin is presently the secretary of the BHA. The present body was elected three years ago. Before that for seven years Vijay Gupta was the secretary. Aslam joined hands with Vijay Gupta and demanded elections in the BHA. The association's president, M. A. K. Pataudi, agreed to hold fresh elections. The date was fixed: 30 April. Within that time the voters' list has to be published and kept open for scrutiny. The final voters' list has to be published after that, nominations for the elections invited, scrutinised and the elections will then be held. All this had to be completed. In between, however, the nationals were coming up. So the elections were postponed and a new date was fixed. On 28 February, Aslam and Gupta called a parallel meeting of the general body. They claimed that the IHF had sent an observer (the IHF denies this) and got themselves elected as office-bearers and agreed to send a team to the Jullundur nationals beginning on 1 March. The team was sent and the resultant chaos is now history.

The role of the IHF is certainly not above criticism. When the association

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Will someone please stop Kalpnath Rai's gibberish?

New Delhi: We have a "handsome" Prime Minister who needs "unconstitutional" support, according to AICC(I) general secretary, Kalpnath Rai, MP. Rai specialises in issuing press releases. And in each release he warns the opposition and reminds them that the people are with his party. That is his right. But he always issues the notes in English, and murders the Queen's language. That too may be his right as a nationalist Indian, but does he have the right to issue hilarious press releases on AICC(I) letterheads, in which he is supposed to hold out the official views of the party led by Indira Gandhi?

On 7 March the AICC(I) office issued a press note (No. 58/'81) signed by general secretary Kalpnath Rai: "Currently there is a glamour on the part of the opposition that Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi is not serious about a meaningful dialogue with them on national issues." (What Rai wanted to say, perhaps, was that there is a 'clamour'; he used 'glamour'). He went on to warn the countrymen that there was a "danger of precarious global situation on our doorsteps." Rai posed a question: "Is it not a fact that US, Sino-Pak, Japan axis is only directed against India?" (Kudos to Rai for this theory, but is it the official view of his party?)

In view of the above "threats," Rai called for a "moratorium on strikes, marches and *gheraos.*" (Congress-I-sponsored rallies, of course, being exempt from this moratorium.) Rai regretted the attitude of the opposition, which, he deplored, "is adopting line of confrontation and militant agitations in the name of so-called various problems." He took 30 lines to deplore the opposition's "attitude" and dismissed the Assam and Gujarat problems in a five-line paragraph, describing them as "most reprehensible and repugnant and is against weaker sections."

Affirming that the "Congress will never compromise with the principles and ideology for which Father of Nation gave up his life," Rai said that it was the "pious duty" of "all really socialist progressive and democratic forces," to "strengthen the handsome Prime Minister so that India stands as one united nation."Rai attacked only two opposition leaders by name—Raj Narain and Atal Behari Vajpayee (in that order). His main complaint with the opposition was that they have not been responding to the PM's "real and sincere" efforts for a national dialogue on major problems. "Her vision is clear and consistent, she wants peace and security on the home front and outside in the world," Rai asserted.

Reiterating that his party stood by the election pledges to all sections of the society and claiming that the farmers were getting the best deal ever now, Rai condemned the CPI and the Janata party (in that order) for supporting the "kulaks." He asserted that, "We have to give first to the interests of poor farmers, agricultural labourers, and the consumers of India. For this we are bent upon curbing inflation and increase productivity at all levels on every front. This task needs an active and unconstitutional support of all the sections of the society."

Mr Rai seems to have achieved what many commentators have been predicting: converted politics into complete gibberish. Three cheers for Kalpnath Rai.

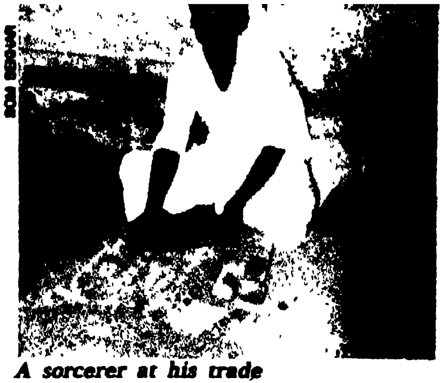
Our Delhi Correspondent

led by Pataudi and Aftabuddin is the recognised body (which notified that fresh elections would be held in April) why did the IHF president, I. M. Mahajan, enter into correspondence with the association led by Aslam Sher Khan? Also, the hosts, Punjab Hockey Association (PHA), refused to recognise the credentials of the Aftabuddin team, which possesses official IHF papers, and asked the two warring groups to settle the dispute amicably. In this context, another interesting political angle was narrated to this correspondent by a Madhya Pradesh MP. According to him, the PHA president, Mr Anand, is related to Mrs Amteshwar Anand, the late Sanjay Gandhi's mother-in-law. Kamal Nath and Mrs Anand's blessings were with the Aslam group, so the PHA refused to recognise the Aftabuddin group on the first day. The intervention by IHF authorities ultimately solved the tangle, but only after damage had been done. Aslam Sher Khan was surely an excellent hockey international. But his entry in politics has been less than joyous.

Our Delhi Correspondent

WITCHCRAFT

There is nothing like *Bhanamati*



A sorcerer at his trade

Bangalore: Strange stories of sorcery, of people suddenly going mad, of people talking in alien tongues, of women receiving strange wounds on their bodies, of healthy cattle dying suddenly without any reasons in the two Karnataka districts, Gulbarga and Bidar, made front page news in several newspapers in July 1980 (*Sunday* 17 August 1980). Known as the *Bhanamati* phenomenon it lasted for more than three months before the government appointed an investigative team to inquire into the strange events. Since then very few incidents have occured.

The *Bhanamati* investigating committee was headed by Dr H. Narasimhaiah, the former VC of Bangalore university, a controversial figure who has made himself very "unpopular" by his incessant attack on godmen, specially the Sathya Sai Baba. Other members of the team were Dr G. N. Reddy, physician, Dr (Mrs) Vinoda N. Murthy, psychologist, Dr H. S. Narayanan, psychiatrist and a couple of legislators.

After four months of investigations, the committee came to the "unanimous and firm conclusion that the so-called *Bhanamati* is not due to supernatural causes." The report candidly discussed the problems of a number of people who were supposed to have been afflicted by *Bhanamati*. Many of the problems attributed to *Bhanamati* were nothing but incidents caused by simple psychological factors which were complicated by the all-pervasive stories of sorcerers on the prowl.

Take these examples: A 60-year-old woman was found behaving abnormally for six months. She would talk to herself, cry, and scream that some people were after her. She said she would be arrested, and was going to be killed by her children. She said she kept on hearing strange voices which frightened her. A detailed examination by the probe team revealed that the woman was stone deaf and not physically ill in any way. Elderly persons with deafness are known to suffer from an illness called paraphrenia. But the lady in distress and her relatives believed that she was a victim of *Bhanamati*. Once the lady was put under psychiatric care, her problems vanished.

Then there was the case of a 25-year-old man who constantly complained of abdominal discomfort in the mornings. Once again, his family believed that sorcerers and witches had cast their spell on him. Detailed medical investigations, however, revealed that the young man was in the habit of drinking copious amounts of water before going to bed, a practice he had made into an obsession. All that he suffered from was a distended bladder and hence the discomfort.

However, while the probe team have been able to explain some of the supernatural occurances, explanations are still wanting in other cases. Take the case of the 16-year-old married girl who had mysterious black wounds on her body and exhibited strange behaviour. The behaviour was attributed to bouts of hysteria, but the black wounds were yet to be explained. "Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that she was the only daughter-in-law of a large joint family," was all that the report could come up with.

Arthur Pais

Screen villians escape attack

Amjad Khan

MILAN STUDIO

Bombay: February was a cruel month for two of the Hindi screen's villains: Amjad Khan and Shakti Kapoor. They found themselves on the receiving end when they were attacked by hoodlums.

On 21 February, Amjad Khan, was waylaid by a gang of hoodlums on the Juhu-Tara Road. They smashed the windscreen of the filmstar's Mercedes. Armed with iron rods the hoodlums tried to beat up the *Sholay* villain but they found that he was indeed a brave man. As Amjad fought back the hoodlums escaped. From the next morning, however, a more wary Amjad Khan has begun carrying a pistol with him wherever he goes. He even practices shooting every day.

Shakti Kapoor, the *Qurbani* villain was fortunate enough to escape knife injuries, when thieves broke into his flat on 25 February. When Shakti was out shooting at Natraj Studios for Dev Anand's new film, *Swami Dada*, two strangers paid a visit to his flat asking for him. Since the filmstar lives alone, his servant answered the door. The strangers left when they were told that Shakti was out shooting. Later, two other strangers rang the bell at Shakti's flat and told the servant that Shakti had asked them to wait in his flat till his return from the shooting. As soon as they were let in, the strangers whipped out knives they had strapped to their ankles. They cornered the servant, tied him up and began emptying out the cupboards. At this point, a neighbour, whom Shakti describes as a very obstinate lady, rang the bell. She kept on ringing the bell. Unnerved by the persistent ringing the thieves let the servant open the door but only after they put a knife to his back warning him he should not shout for help. But the servant showed a lot of guts, pulled himself free and ran out of the flat shouting, "*Chor, chor!* (Thief, thief)" The thieves lost their nerves and fled.

Anil Saari

Shakti Kapoor

DURGAPRASAD

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI

'Indian Muslims find themselves in danger'

Hyderabad : Delegates came in thousands, beyond the expectation of the organisers, to attend the sixth All-India Ijtema of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and the 15th century Hijri celebrations which concluded on 22 February at Wadi-e-Huda, 10 kms from here The support which the delegates gave to the conference showed that the Jamaat had not lost its faithful with the ban imposed on it during the Emergency. And the organisers also went out to make the conference a success: a temporary auditorium had been constructed over 375,000 sq.ft.—enough to accommodate 2,00,000 delegates or alternately 1,25,000 *namazis*. A separate auditorium had been built to accommodate 15,000 ladies. Twenty-five residential blocks were constructed for the delegates over seven lakh sq.ft. There was even a separate block for the female delegates. And five lakh local Muslims—men, women and children—joined in the celebrations besides 60,000 delegates who came from all over the country. The AP State Road Transport Corporation had initially made arrangements to run 15 buses as "Wadi-e-Huda specials" but they had to press more than 100 buses into service.

The Ijtema began with the *Qutba* (presidential remarks) which took the Amir-e-Jamaat, Maulana Mohammed Yusuf, more than an hour to read. The Maulana spoke about the *Ummat-e-Muslimah* (the Muslim community), its role in the world, the duties and responsibilities of Indian Muslims, the question of unity among Indian Muslims, secularism and socialism, the moral degeneration in the wake of scientific and technological advancement, the need for an equitabble economic order, the Palestine issue, Afghanistan, the status of Muslim minorities in different countries, the role of the Islamic movements and the "blessings" of Islamic revival. He was worried over the situation of the Muslims in India since in the post-Independence period "the 12 per cent population of this country finds itself in a dangerous situation from the communal elements, the police and the administration."

Arab delegates at the session

The Maulana also attacked the communities who, he claimed, had benefitted from the present chaos in the country. He warned Indians in general and Muslims in particular to beware of the communities. Said he: "Muslims should understand fully that communism can neither tolerate Islam in the national life nor on the international plane."

The Ijtema brought into sharp focus, the differences between the Jamaat and the government of India. The Amir-e-Jamaat claimed that foreign delegates had been denied visas to attend the conference. He said that Indian missions in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Egypt and Pakistan had refused visas to those who wanted to attend the Ijtema.

Among the foreign dignitaries who attended the Ijtema were Sheikh Abdulllah al-Zayed and Sheikh Omer Fullatah from th Islamic University of Medina, Dr Abdullah al-Turki from Ibn-e-Saud Islamic University, Sheikh Lukman Salafi from Riyadh University, Dr Ahmed Tutoonji of World Assembly of Muslim League, Dr Tanzeem Wasati of the UK Islamic Mission, Dr Yakub Mirza of MSA (the USA), and Syedna Zainab Al-Ghazali, a female delegate of Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen of Egypt. The Imam-e-Jam of Teheran nd member of the Supreme Defence Council of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenai, also attended the Ijtema as the special envoy of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The Jamaat-e-Islami had also organised the "Aks-e-Hudu" (Images of God) Islamic Exhibition at the Wadi-e-Huda. Through a series of photographs, charts, sketches and paintings, the Exhibition portrayed the various aspects of Islam and its teachings. Another "highlight" of the Ijtema was the "Associates' Meet" where as many as 2,000 non-Muslims participated and exchanged views on Islam.

The chief organiser of the Ijtema and the Andhra Pradesh Jamaat chief, Maulana Abdul Aziz, and the All-India Jamaat Chief, Maulana Mohammed Yusuf, claimed that funds for the Ijtema had been raised locally. Nothing had been received from Arab or Iranian sources. Maulana Aziz had initially estimated the expenditure on the Ijtema at Rs 10 lakhs. Later though he revised the figure to Rs 20 lakhs, the expenditure could have been anything between Rs 25 and 35 lakhs.

Syed Majeedul Hasan

Jamaat finds a foothold in Egypt

Cairo: The Jamaat-e-Islami, often referred to as the Muslim Society is now making itself felt in Egypt. With a membership of around 100,000 consisting essentially of high school and university students, the Jamaat emerged as a full-fledged organisation three years ago although its underground activities had been going on for several years. Its members are dedicated almost to the point of being fanatical, disciplined and extremely well-organised and have the open support of policemen including some middle-ranking officers. Although it began as nothing more than a religious philanthropic organisation dedicated to student welfare, the Jamaat is gradually replacing the Muslim Brotherhood which until a short while ago was considered to be the only alternative to President Sadat's rule in Egupt. The aim of both the groups is the formation of an Egyptian Islamic state and there is close cooperation between the two groups. In fact some of the senior positions in the Jamaat are held by Brothers (members of the Brotherhood). Impatient of the ageing members of the Brotherhood, the Jamaat is now expanding its own sphere of influence from the student community in schools and universities to the Muslim community in general. Accordingly, a large centre is being constructed in Abbasieh near Cairo and consists of a library, clinic and a day-care centre apart from a mosque and an assembly hall. It is believed that the Jamaat is being funded by Saudi Arabia which had been financing the Brotherhood; substantial sums are also being received from devout Egyptian businessmen.

Our Special Correspondent

TAMIL NADU

Will MGR abolish dry laws?

Madras: Will the prevalent drought in the ten districts of the state and the demands of the farmers sound the death knell of MGR's most cherished dream—prohibition? The AIADMK along with the CPI(M) legislators are demanding the relaxation of prohibition so as to enable the state to earn a revenue of at least Rs 300 crores each year. Already MGR's government has written off farmers' loans to the tune of Rs 60 crores. In addition, Rs 500 lakhs have been sanctioned for the implementation of drought relief schemes and water schemes for the drought-stricken areas.

MGR's initial reaction was one of no response primarily because he had used prohibition as one of the strongest issues in his campaign against Karunanidhi. In 1972, the former CM had suspended prohibition when MGR fell out with him and within a few months began organising rallies demanding the reintroduction of dry laws. The protests had been so strong that Karunanidhi reimposed the dry laws.

After assuming office of the CM in 1980, MGR introduced the strictest dry laws in the state. Anyone found drinking was liable to be punished with three months of RI and a fine; in the case of government servants, the fine and the jail sentence was double and the government servant was liable to lose his job. Prohibition laws have been relaxed since then. Today, any 30-year-old can obtain a permit that allows him to two units of hard liquor or 24 bottles of beer; with a medical certificate, this quota can be doubled. It is reported that already 2,24,000 people hold permits in the state. However, in view of the limited number of liquor shops, there is almost a perpetual liquor famine resulting in a thriving trade in illicit liquor.

With mounting pressure from not only the opposition but also his own partymen MGR is now considering an alternative to the existing dry laws. The CM is planning to reduce the permit rates from Rs 25 to Rs 5 and permitting restaurants to sell 'weak' beer, as is being done in Maharashtra. Certain days of the month will be declared dry and toddy will be made easily available in the villages. The AIADMK partymen have also suggested that the government should market arrack at cheap rates so that trade in illicit liquor is reduced. This, it is believed will not only reduce the race for permits but also ease the chaos prevailing on the law and order front in the state.

Arthur Pais

LABOUR RELATIONS

The strike is called off

Bangalore: The 77-day-old public sector strike of nearly 80,000 workers ended on 12 March but not before it had taken its toll in monetary losses and men: the five units together incurred a daily loss of Rs 1.5 crores and three people had died in police firing on 21 January during the Bangalore *bandh* (*Sunday* 1 February). The strike had been called by the Joint Action Front (JAF) comprising 12 unions of five public sector units: Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), Indian Telephone Industries (ITI), Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT). Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) and Bharat Earth Movers Ltd (BEML). The workers were demanding parity in wages with workers. On 10 and 11 March, the Karnataka CM R. Gundu Rao met leaders of the opposition and the JAF requesting them to withdraw the strike assuring them he would negotiate a settlement with the centre.

But before the strike was withdrawn there were attempts to break the resistance and the morale of the workers. Matters came to a head when at 9 pm on 5 March the JAF union headquarters on Queens Road was attacked. The casualties included the JAF convenor D. Rajagopal, MLC and state president of the Hindu Mazdoor Sabha and a few workers. The affair had all the trimmings of a mafia-inspired hit job. Unknown assailants in a maroon Ambassador drove up to the premises and attacked the office with soda bottles and iron rods. Commenting on the incident, the JAF joint convenors, Michael Fernandes MLA, M. S. Krishnan, S. Mahadevan and T. G. Srinivasamurthy said: "This is a war between 80,000 workers and Mr F. M. Khan, MP and his strike-breaking *goondas*. We have all along been peaceful. As a result on this *goondaism*, the government of Indian and the government of Karnataka despite their appeals can be sure that the strike will continue."

Rajya Sabha member F. M. Khan, who is also the state president of the INTUC (the Congress-I trade union) and a close associate of the chief minister retaliated to the JAF statement. He said if they wanted war, "we" (he meant the INTUC) would fight back. Later however, he told a newsman that the remark was not in response to the JAF leaders' statement but to an incident which had occurred four hours earlier in which an Ambassador car carrying some members of the National Students of India (NSI) and other supporters of Mr Khan was burnt at the ITI colony. They were on a door-to-door campaign requesting workers to return to their duties. Even before the strike was launched, Mr Khan had attempted to negotiate with the centre to give the INTUC a better standing among the workers. When his efforts had failed the Congress(I) MP had continued to act as a spokesman for the government without achieving any noticeable success in the negotiations. With no end of the strike in sight Mr Khan adopted means to pressurise the workers to bow down.

The unprecedented violence on the JAF created a furore in the city. The CITU president lashed out at Mr Khan at a mammoth joint general body meeting of all the striking trade unions on 7 March: "You can plant a planter as an MP in the Rajya Sabha but you cannot plant a planter as a leader of the working class...*Goondas* will be *goondas* whatever their labels."

And in the beginning of March it looked as if the strike would not end soon. But negotiations picked up momentum when the JAF leaders stated categorically in February that they would not stick to their original demand for pay parity with BHEL. This come-down by the strikers was obviously meant to facilitate an early settlement. And negotiations did start to end the strike.

Louise Fernandes

ORISSA

Lok Dal survey inspires *kisan* rally

Bhubaneswar : A majority of the farmers and agricultural labourers of the state do not get two square meals a day for five months each year. The state's rural electricity programme has been a failure and the introduction of hullers has increased the misery of the village widows whose only means of livelihood is husking paddy. These are some of the findings of the survey conducted by the Lok Dal in Orissa. Armed with 30,000 printed forms, the party's MLAs and functionaries went to the state's 141 constituencies between 30 January and 8 February 1981. Their object: a survey to assess the level of poverty in rural Orissa. The assessment was the brainchild of the veteran leader Biju Patnaik.

What they found was staggering. After 33 years of independence, the farmers and rural people are badly off. What they want is employment throughout the year at a minimum wage of Rs four or five a day. This has not been possible because of low investment in village and small-scale industries. Said Biju Patnaik after the survey : "I am convinced that the nation's industrial approach has to take a U-turn and the employed and under-employed must become the focal point of the national industrial planning and investment pattern. Two crores people out of the total population of 2.5 crores in the state living below the poverty line cannot bear their miseries any longer." He held out a warning: "There is going to be a bloody revolution."

The completion of the survey was followed by a massive *Kisan* rally, held under the aegis of the Lok Dal at Atabira in Sambalpur district. The rally was attended by over 20,000 farmers. Among the leaders who addressed the gathering was Chaudhury Charan Singh.

The survey and the rally underlined the fact that the Lok Dal was no longer a dormant party in the state. The rally was essential for the party's image since it has no farmers' leader of the stature of Sharad Joshi or Narayanaswamy Naidu. The slogans raised in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu for the better price of farm produce have caught on with the Lok Dal. But whether the party will be able to turn this into a full-fledged agitation will depend on its organisational ability. Biju Patnaik and the Lok Dal for the moment are riding the crest of popularity with the present Janaki Ballav Patnaik government failing on all fronts.

Swarup Jena

GOOD NEWS

The awardwinners

The Palekar award for journalist and non-journalist newspaper employees was implemented without fuss in two newspaper offices in Bhopal and Sambalpur—because they are run by one man or one family. The Hindi daily *Alok*, published from Bhopal, has only one employee; so its proprietor readily agreed to extend him all benefits of the award. The owners of *Koshala*, an Oriya daily from Sambalpur, belong to the same family. There is no outsider on the staff, and all the printing press workers are casual labourers.

Vehicle for the handicapped

Kali Vinod Tewari, physically handicapped since childhood, is among the courageous few who take up, and win, challenges. And Tewari's challenge was tough: he ventured to prove that men like him are assets, not liabilities, to society.

After years of effort, Tewari designed and made a vehicle for the disabled—a three-wheeler with a .35 cc engine which does a good 45 kms to the litre and reaches a maximum of 35 kmph. It is cheap, completely hand-controlled, including the start, and needs the minimum of force to operate. The vehicle was produced at a workshop Tewari runs in Kanpur. The district magistrate, Kanpur, introduced the vehicle at a fair organised by the special employment exchange for the disabled. Tewari was also given a shield for his fine work. Lucknow's Artificial Limbs Centre and rehabilitation centres in Kanpur, Calcutta and Jabalpur have already given Tewari's product their seal of approval; they have found it best suited to the needs of the disabled.

Growing care

Sneh Niketan in Jabalpur, the first private home for mentally retarded children in Madhya Pradesh, has come a long way. It was set up in 1974 with only three inmates. Today it is being run under the supervision of the Methodist Church of India, with 67 children on its rolls. It has a school, a 60-bed hostel, and a playground. Fifty-nine of the inmates are non-Christians, and 38 of them are living on scholarships of Rs 120 per month each from Kindernorthilfe, West Germany. The home has 27 boarders but no servants. The children on the campus wash their clothes and utensils.

Arthritis drug developed

The Regional Research Laboratory, Hyderabad, has discovered and developed a new non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic drug called tromaril. The drug, an anthranilic acid derivative coded "RH-8", whose chemical name is N-beta-phenylethyl-anthranilic acid and international non-proprietary name is enfenamic acid, was tried in more than 300 cases over four years. Even before it was subjected to human clinical trials, tromaril underwent pharmacological, biochemical and toxicological evaluation. In view of the excellent response of patients to the drug in open clinical trials of arthritis, episiotomy, transvaginal surgery, dentistry, trauma and in post-operative cases and good tolerance, "double blind clinical trials" were organised under the supervision of selected doctors to assess the drug's clinical efficacy in comparison with previously used drugs like oxyphenbutazone and placebo.

Just computers

The Allahabad High Court, which is among the courts with largest backlog of pending cases, is to acquire equipment that might solve most of its problems—computers to ensure speedy clearance of cases.

Cancer drug doing well

A five-member committee of doctors appointed by the West Bengal government to evaluate the efficacy of Sicafek, an anti-cancer drug developed by two Calcutta scientists, has come up with an encouraging report: the initial positive response of cervix cancer towards Sicafek has been "high". The drug had been developed in the early Seventies by Dr Jayasree Roy Chowdhury and Dr Himadri Chowdhury of the Chittaranjan National Cancer Research Centre (CNRC), Calcutta. It was first used on animals and then human patients. Human experiments have had to be limited to cervical cancer cases at the Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital on permission from the drug controller of India. Encouraged by the anti-tumour activity due to the drug, the committee has suggested trials on other types of cancer. It has also suggested combining the drug with radiation and other chemotherapeutic drugs for improving results. The condition of two cases reportedly improved from "inoperable" to "operable" following administration of Sicafek.

Crucial equipment

A score of the 100-odd cancer patients who visit Chandigarh's Post Graduate Institute of Medicine (PGI) can look forward to better days. The institute's radiotherapy treatment section is to have sophisticated new equipment that will make it possible to administer accurate doses of radiation to cancer patients and monitor their progress. The equipment includes a computerised optimisation system for radiotherapy planning, a thermoluminiscent dosimetry, a therapy simulator and a vacuum-forming machine. After it is commissioned on 1 April, the computer will plan the entire course of treatment, determine the dosage of radiation and ensure its distribution in tumorous regions with the minimum effect on healthy tissue—in less than 20 minutes, where the process once took five hours.

Improved drug for blindness

The Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Studies, New Delhi, which celebrated the 14th anniversary of its foundation on 10 March, claims a major achievement: it has developed an indigenous drug for the blinding eye disease, trachoma. The drug was obtained from a plant called *rasanjan*, clinically tested and found to be more effective than drugs like sulphacetamide, which were used previously.

KHAAS BAAT

Look who *Dabboo Kapoor* is eyeing. None other than *Rati Agnihotri*, the north Indian girl from the south. She has promised to stay clear of South Indian films. That is indeed very convenient to Daboo. At every party, if ever Daboo happens to see Ms Agnihotri, he drops everything to rush to her. He then holds her attention with his wisecracks and of course, those fantastic eyes. Perhaps he had been doing all that on the instructions of his father because the Kapoor charm worked and Rati is starring in the next RK production.

Perhaps, it was also a lesson for *Tina Munim* who let her heart rule her head. Remember when Dabboo was giving her the eye she ditched him to go with *Dev Anand*. Well Papa Kapoor's son did not like it at all since he is very confident of his own likeability. Stop licking your wounds, Dabboo. We knew you had not lost the touch!

Talk of permissive pairs and the names that instantly come to mind are *Kabir* and *Protima*. When the *Hema-Dharam* affair sizzled the filmy industry, the Bedis lost their foothold. Nevertheless, they remain the original permissive pair. Kabir parks his American wife in Los Angeles where he has a house. And whenever he wants the Indian recipe for happiness, he jets in to Bombay. Recently he was here meeting his old friends and of course, ex-wife, Protima. When he is here he drowns himself in everything *desi*: his ex-wife, kids, home and even his favourite drink, rum and Thums Up!

Look what *Bindiya* is doing to herself. She has become a real *pativrata stree*. Everytime someone speaks of *Vinod Mehra* in her presence she starts acting coy, very much like a newly-married girl. In fact, she doesn't mention him by name, as wives of older generations still do. But Vinod should not be worried. Bindiya has been imaginative enough to give him a name. No she is no *angrez* to use 'my husband.' Being a true Indian she uses '*mere miya*.'

DURGAPRASAD

Deepti Naval

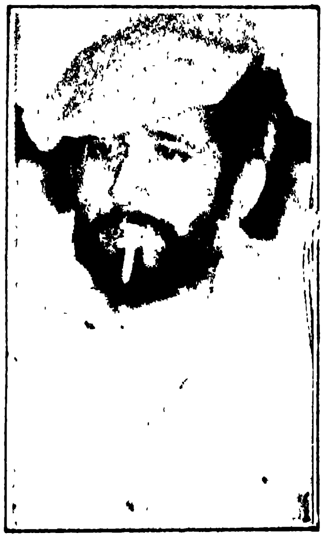
Zaheera

DURGAPRASAD

Rati Agnihotri

What's wrong with our *desi* starlets? Don't the producers like them any more these days? *Deepti Naval* started it all after the sheepish attempts of London-born *Zaheera*. Hardly had *Dara Singh* brought over the dazzling *Binny Rak*, the filmy grapevine was agog with stories of this smashing debonair actor who had done the rounds of the London stage and TV circuits. And if he is the guy *Shabana Azmi* is falling for, he must be a wow. And Shabana should know for *Marc Zuber*, (oops! I had forgotten to tell you his name), is starring with her in *Yeh Nazdeekiyan*. Let's hope that Marc, may there be more of his clan, can boo out the reigning superstars of the Hindi film world.

Naseeruddin Shah



DURGAPRASAD

NASEERUDDIN SHAH has created a name for himself in *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai*? They call him the Superactor. His acting as Albert Pinto is drawing full houses in this metropolis. And the big-name girls in the film industry are falling head over heels for him. *Rekha* being the number one in the queue.

I shudder to think what the *Manmohan Desais* and the *Subhash Ghais* would do to a superactor like Naseeruddin, if he lets them, that is. Look what happened to another National School of Drama product, *Raj Babbar*. He has been virtually reduced to a mannerism-ridden robot who stays in action through three four-hour shifts. Can we request the Desais and the Ghais to leave our superactor Naseeruddin Shah in peace? Let him be him.

KHAAS BAAT

Jayapradha seems to be holding the magic wand for box office hits. Jealous tongues have said that she was the one who brought luck to *Rishi Kapoor* and made *Sargam* a hit. Now, *Rajesh Khanna* seems to have taken the cue. He has great hopes of making *Dil e Naadan* a super hit. The film has some passionate love scenes of Rajesh and Jayapradha and it is a remake of a superhit starring *Kamalahasan*, *Sripriya* and *Rajnikant*. Rajesh is hoping for a miracle since two of his Madras-made films *Red Rose* and *Bandish* flopped. We pray for the success of the more promising *Dil e Nadaan*.

Madhumala: she could contact Deepa

What is *Deepa* doing to herself? The 16-year-old up-and-coming star already has a bustline that is being talked about in town, but more astonishing—it is still growing! Even her mother admits that "She looks so b-i-g." And all because Deepa has been swallowing 'vitamin' tablets brought in by a relative all the way from the United States. So, budding heroines with a bustline problem may please contact Deepa for details of her vitamin pills. Meanwhile Deepa had better take it easy on her pills or one of these days she might burst at her seams.

Things are not going right for ex-sex bomb *Jayabharathi* since she walked out on her lover *Harry Pothen*. *Sathar*, the man she got married to has been trying rather unsuccessfully to make it big. And Jayabharathi's own career isn't flourishing either. There are rumours that she is straining herself mentally and needs psychiatric help. And to crown it all, there was an income tax raid on her house. But what do you think they collected? A paltry Rs 50,000. Wonder what happened to all the money she got by baring herself in a dozen-and-a-half Malayalam films.

Surekha and Pratap Pothen: a still from Thakara

Vijay Anand and Lakshmishree: how low can you get?

Not all films from the south need to be extravaganzas. *M. S. Basu*, a journalist has written and produced a Tamil film, *Nenjodu Nenjum*, on a paltry budget of a little more than a lakh rupees. It is one of the few black-and-white films to hit the screen in recent times. How did Basu manage on his tight budget? Says he: "We used only one car, my hero *Vijayanand* and heroine *Lakshmishree*, travelled in the same vehicle with the unit members; the car was always jam-packed. And we carried the shooting equipment in the car itself-...We shot on unknown locations around the city, and we shot so fast that hardly anyone knew what was going on...so we didn't ask for any police protection." *Nenjodu* is the story of how an impotent husband solves his bedroom problem in a novel way. He spots a man who looks and behaves exactly like him. (Miracle of miracles even the voice is the same!) and persuades him to sleep with his unsuspecting wife played by Lakshmishree, who committed suicide a few months ago.

Basu, incidentally is planning a bilingual film in Tamil and Hindi, *Dasarathi's nine daughters*. Its a film on family planning and once again it'll star newcomers and upcoming starlets like *Madhubala*. If *Nenjodu* is a hit then producers should back people like Basu who can still manage to make a film with little money in these days of rising prices.

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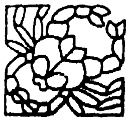
Beginning 22 March
This week the Sun, Venus and Mars are in Pisces, Mercury is in Aquarius, Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto are in Virgo. The Moon will be moving through Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius from Virgo.

ARIES (15 April—14 May) Your domestic affairs will be the source of inspiration and happiness. You will receive letters which will bring good news concerning your career prospects or business. On the whole, this should prove to be a successful week. You might be promoted. Be discreet in both written and spoken word. You are further advised to conserve your energies and resources for the future.**Good dates:** 22, 25 and 26. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.

TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Provided you are discreet and careful on your professional front, this week has a fair measure of success in store for you. Keep your business partners and other associates in good humour. Love and domestic affairs are not well signified. Someone close to you will cause anxiety. You are advised not to make changes in your plans and to avoid getting into disputes with those in authority.**Good dates:** 22, 24 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North

GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Promotions or transfers are in store for you this week. You may have to undertake a journey which will be the answer to one of your pressing domestic problems. This is a very critical week for businessmen. Medical expenditure is in store for you. The time is particularly favourable for those who belong to the working classes. Avoid disputes and controversies. Look after your health.**Good dates:** 23, 26 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 7.**Favourable direction** :North-west.

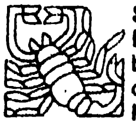


CANCER (15 July—14 August) Relatives will help you in various ways this week. Domestic affairs will keep you quite busy and, as a result, you may not find time to devote to your professional affairs. Love and matrimonial affairs will make steady progress. The death of a distant friend or relative will cause grief. Financially you will be in a spot of trouble. Look after your health.**Good dates:** 24, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:**2, 8 and 9.**Favourable direction:**East.

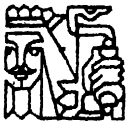
LEO (15 August—14 September) This will be a happier and certainly more eventful week for you. The time will be particularly favourable for love and matrimonial affairs. Social engagements will keep you busy otherwise. Speculative ventures will yield good results. An elderly relative will prove very helpful to you. You are advised to exercise restraint. Check extravagance. **Good dates:** 22, 24 and 26. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 8 and 9.**Favourable direction:**South.

VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This week will provide you with plenty of opportunities for fun and frolic. You may, however, lose something which has been very precious to you. The time is particularly good for gambling, speculation and love affairs. You will find yourself in a position to repay your debts. Professional affairs will make good progress, despite opposition from seniors or those in authority. **Good dates:** 22, 23 and 27.**Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North-west.

LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Your business will suffer a minor setback in the early part of this week. Otherwise your affairs will make steady progress. New friends and fresh interests will contribute to your happiness. Children will also be the source of joy and comfort. The time is favourable for courtship and marriage. Your health will improve. You are advised to keep up your correspondence with old friends. **Good dates:** 25, 26 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-east.



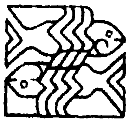
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A female member of your family may cause anxiety to you However, womenfolk in general will be of great help to you. Those in authority will also prove helpful. You may gain financially, provided you are discreet. Much of course will depend on your own efforts and initiative. You are advised to look after your health. **Good dates:** 22, 26 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 8. **Favourable direction:** East.



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This promises to be a very successful week for you. Matters of the heart will, however, cause anxiety. Litigations should also be avoided. In moments of crisis, womenfolk will come to your rescue. You might earn a new friend. Relatives will not be very co-operative. You are advised not to mix business with pleasure and to avoid disputes. **Good dates:** 24, 26 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 7. **Favourable direction:** South.

CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Your problems, despite your efforts, will not be solved this week. You are likely to remain perplexed and apprehensive. Your domestic front will also prove disappointing. Any wrong move or decision on your part may prove very costly. You will have to constantly guard against deceit. You will not be in a position to trust or rely on too many people. Do not be despondent. There are better days ahead. **Good dates:** 22, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.

AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Though most of your pressing problems will be solved, you will still find minor obstacles on your path to success this week. You might also face opposition on your professional front. An old person of the opposite sex will cause anxiety to you. However, the time is particularly favourable for love and matrimonial affairs. You are advised not to waste time on questionable pleasures **Good dates:** 23, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) You may have to seek alternate means of subsistence this week. This will be due to disappointment with your current assignment. You may not find yourself in a position to depend on friends. Relatives will not be helpful either. In any case, you should not rely too much on others. If you are to make headway, you have to make it on your own steam. Look after your health. **Good dates:** 22, 23 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North.

Political forecast for 1981: Significant changes along with an acute shortage of foodgrains are in store for the USSR. Sino-Soviet relations, however, should improve considerably by the end of this year. No progress is foreseen in US-Soviet relations. Russian foreign policy will create panic in West Asia. India will continue to enjoy Russian patronage. A significant change will be in the attitude of Iran towards the USSR, despite the latter's presence in Afghanistan..

AMRITLAL

The experience

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chess

Not every day does one have the opportunity to read a detailed account of a reigning world champion's rise to the summit, which is why the publication of *Chess is My Life* by Karpov and Roshal (Pergamon, £15; paperback £6·95) is so worthy of discussion.

Although written in the main by Alexander Roshal a well-known Russian chess journalist, 'Chess is My Life' was obviously produced with the close collaboration and cooperation of Karpov himself and most of the notes to the games are his. So there is no doubt that this is an authoritative biography of the world champion.

Originally produced in Russian under the somewhat spurious title of 'The Ninth Vertical', the Pergamon publication is Dr K. P. Neat's excellent English translation which traces Karpov's career from his earliest years up to but not including his world title defence in Baguio 1978. The English version reads very well (possibly even better than the Russian original by all accounts) but somewhere along the line one begins to pick up a feeling of insecurity in the narrative. For although Roshal is at great pains to impress upon the reader's Karpov's great natural abilities and his growing string of successes which rose so naturally to a crescendo in 1975 (when Karpov became world champion), the still greater length to which he goes in attempting to justify the decision by FIDE (the World Chess Federation) to award Karpov the world title, merely suggests that is indeed something there to be justified. (Karpov became champion by default when FIDE rejected Fischer's terms for defending his title.) This feeling is strengthened by the rather hollow way Karpov's only two rivals, Fischer and Korchnoi, are dismissed as raving paranoiacs.

Apparently Fischer was mad because he expected FIDE to accept regulations giving the champion (then Fischer) an unfair advantage. No mention was made of the fact that Karpov subsequently defended his title in Baguio under regulations which protected the champion's title at least as well as those which Fischer had demanded and FIDE rejected. And Korchnoi? Well, everybody knows that Korchnoi is completely crazy. After all, anybody who leaves the Soviet Union must be mad.

On the subject of Korchnoi, it is amusing to compare this book with Korchnoi's own autobiography published some two years ago by B. T. Batsford under the title 'Chess is My Life'. What a coincidence.

But returning to Karpov and Roshal, I do not think the book ultimately does Karpov justice. By overstating Karpov's case and denouncing his rivals Roshal sacrifices much of the credibility which much of the book deserves. Moderation in all things.

Too many sacrifices

White: Donchev. Black: Spassov
Sicilian Defence

1. P—K4, P—QB4; 2. N—KB3, P—Q3; 3. P—Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, N—KB3; 5. N—QB3, P—QR3; 6. B—QB4, P—K3; 7. B—N3, P—QN4; 8. O—O, B—K2; 9. P—B4, O—O; 10. P—K5, P x P; 11. P x P, KN—Q2; 12. B—K3, N x P; 13. Q—R5, QN—Q2; 14. QR—Q1, B—N2; 15. R x P, R x R; 16. N x KP, Q—B1; 17. R x N, Q x R; 18. Q x N, K—R1; 19. Q—R5, QR—KB1; 20. N x R, R x N; 21. P—KR3, P—N5; 22. N—Q5, R—B4; 23. N—N6, Q—B3; 24. Q—N4, B—B4; 25. N—B4, R—B5; 26. Q—N3, R x N; 27. Resigns (27 B x R, B x B+; 28. Q x B, Q x P mate).

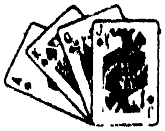
Trouble up the Volga

White: Farago. Black: Knaak
Volga Gambit

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—QB4; 3. P—Q5, P—QN4; 4. P x P, P—QR3; 5. P x P, B x P; 6. N—QB3, P—Q3; 7. N—B3, P—KN3; 8. P—KN3, B—N2; 9. B—R3, QN—Q2; 10. O—O, N—N3; 11. R—K1, O—O; 12. R—N1, B—B5; 13. P—K4, B x RP; 14. N x B, R x N; 15. B—Q2, Q—R1; 16. B—B3, N—R5; 17. B x N, B x B; 18. P—K5, P x P; 19. Q—N3, N x P; 20. R x N, R—R6; 21. Q—N8, R x N; 22. Q x P, P—K5; 23. R—N8, Q—R7; 24. R—N2, P—K6!; 25. Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



When a defender leads through dummy's Kx and as declarer you hold Jx, which card do you play from dummy? An article by Jens Boeck in a Danish paper makes a distinction that is seldom formulated, although good players are aware of it. Compare these two deals:

Dealer, South. Love all

♠ 8 6 4 3 2
♥ K 3
♦ K Q 9
♣ A J 4

♠ K Q J — N — ♠ —
♥ Q 10 8 4 — W E — ♥ A 9 7 6 5
♦ J 5 4 — S — ♦ 10 8 3 2
♣ 10 8 3 — ♣ 9 7 6 5

♠ A 10 9 7 5
♥ J 2
♦ A 7 6
♣ K Q 2

South plays in Four Spades and West leads the King of spades, on which East shows out. Declarer will naturally eliminate the clubs and diamonds before exiting with a trump. West will now try a low heart.

Since West was forced to lead a heart or concede a ruff-and-discard, South has no certain indication about the lie of the Queen and Ace. Probably he will do the right thing, because West has already turned up with ♠ K Q J and ♦ J.

On this lay-out there is a strong pointer to the right play:

♠ 7 6 5 4 2
♥ K 3
♦ K Q 9
♣ A J 4

♠ A K 3 — N — ♠ —
♥ A 10 8 4 — W E — ♥ Q 9 7 6 5
♦ J 5 4 — S — ♦ 10 8 3 2
♣ 10 9 8 — ♣ 7 6 5 3

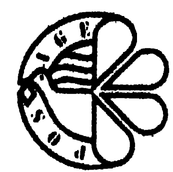
♠ Q J 10 9 8
♥ J 2
♦ A 7 6
♣ K Q 2

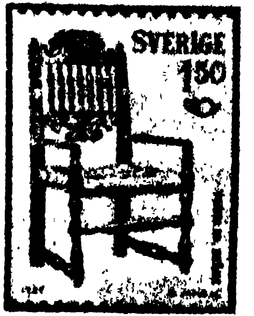
Now West leads ♣ 10 against Four Spades. At some point in the play West, as before, leads a low heart. Now South knows that West was not obliged to touch hearts – he could have exited with a trump – so it is right to play the King from dummy.

The principle to remember is that you must not let a defender diddle you out of a trick you would surely make if you had to play the suit yourself.

TERENCE REESE

stamps





The Scandinavian countries regularly issue series of stamps with a common theme to illustrate their cultural affinities. Nineteenth century handicrafts provide the theme for the 1980 series. The two Swedish stamps feature a wooden rocking cradle of a type made in North Bothnia since the 18th century and (above) a rush-seated armchair made in the province of Scania about 150 years ago. The chair shown on the new stamp was bought a century ago for 2 kroner, about 2s, and is now in the Nordic Museum, Stockholm.

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. When did the Great Leap Forward take place?
2. What is the Knave of Diamonds, other than a playing card?
3. By what pathological term would an individual who over-evaluates his own importance be referred to?
4. What are readymades?
5. Where would one find the Ustacha in the 1930s?
6. What is Skinner's Box?

ANSWERS

1. The Chinese policy of forced industrialisation started in 1958 aiming at an annual rate of industrial growth of over 25%.
2. It is originally the title of an art exhibition organised by the Russian painter Michel Larionov in Moscow in December 1910.
3 He is a megalomaniac.
4. Term adopted by painter Marcel Duchamp to describe his Dada-like use for exhibition of incongruous manufactured objects like urinals in 1917.
5. In Hungary. It was a Fascist-style terrorist organisation of Croat nationalists organised in early 1930s by Ante Pavelic.
6. A device developed by B. F. Skinner for training animals to learn appropriate responses.

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Courtesy: The Taj Intercontinental, Bombay.

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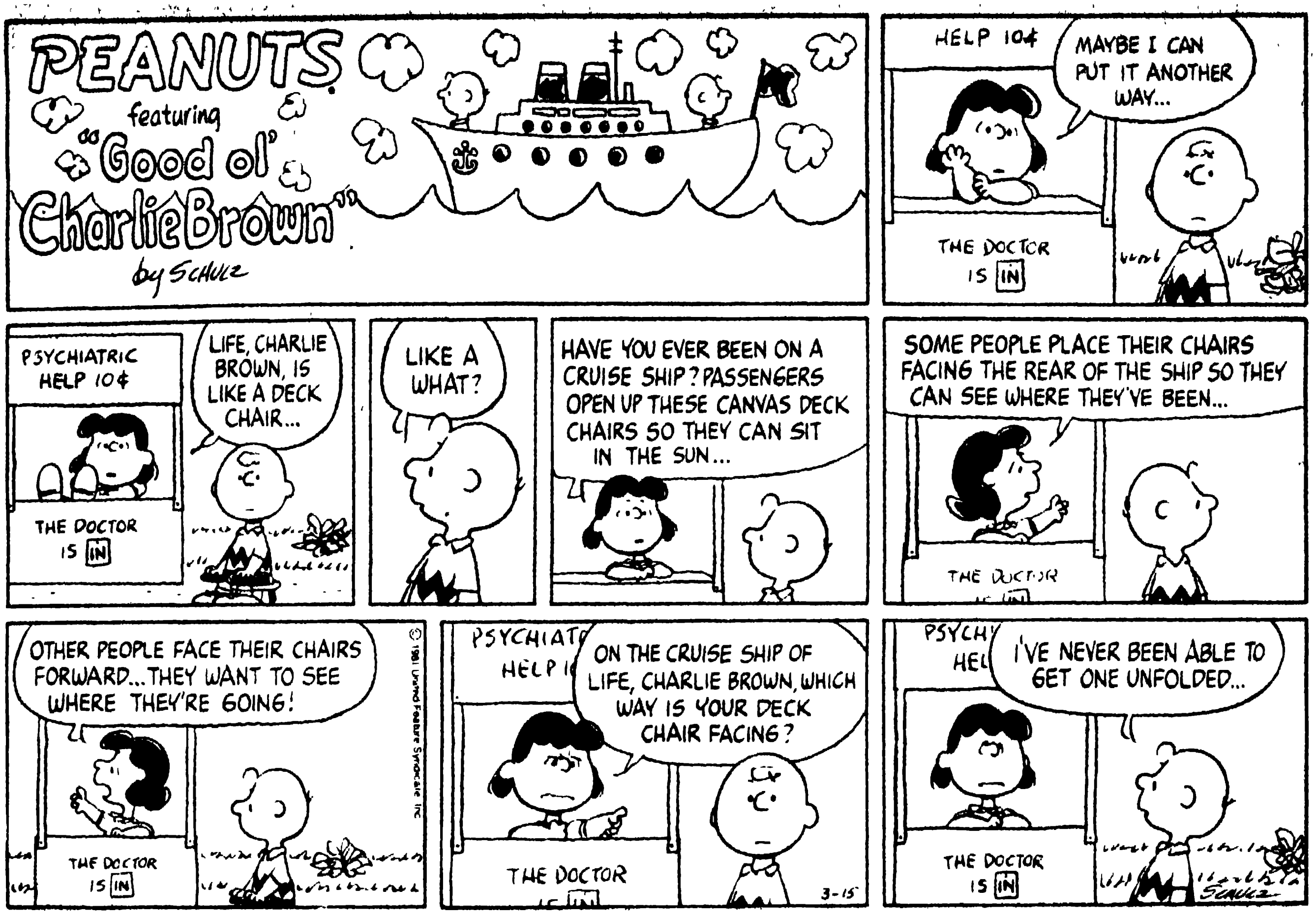
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LIFE, CHARLIE BROWN, IS LIKE A DECK CHAIR...
THE DOCTOR IS IN
LIKE A WHAT?
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON A CRUISE SHIP? PASSENGERS OPEN UP THESE CANVAS DECK CHAIRS SO THEY CAN SIT IN THE SUN...
SOME PEOPLE PLACE THEIR CHAIRS FACING THE REAR OF THE SHIP SO THEY CAN SEE WHERE THEY'VE BEEN...
THE DOCTOR
OTHER PEOPLE FACE THEIR CHAIRS FORWARD...THEY WANT TO SEE WHERE THEY'RE GOING!
THE DOCTOR IS IN
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PSYCHIATRIC HELP
ON THE CRUISE SHIP OF LIFE, CHARLIE BROWN, WHICH WAY IS YOUR DECK CHAIR FACING?
THE DOCTOR
3-15
PSYCH HEL
I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO GET ONE UNFOLDED...
THE DOCTOR IS IN
SCHULZ

ASIDES

The RSVP syndrome

By V. K. Madhavan Kutty

I have come to the conclusion that one should be careful in sending out invitations. I do get invitations for official and non-official functions occasionally. The only thing I like about them is the inevitable *RSVP, Regrets only*. I invariably regret. How good it is to know that someone wants to invite you and expects *regrets only!* This practice I adopted at international levels, could eliminate a good deal of confusion.

For example, Afghanistan invited the Soviet troops. Had there been the *RSVP, Regrets only,* in that invitation, history would have been different. And the monopoly press would never have got an opportunity to embarrass us about the non-aligned meet. Think of the trouble one oversight on the part of Afghanistan has caused. It has made us send out so many invitations to other countries to come and talk to us so that we could explain the Afghan stand.

A proper invitation, I think, would have solved a lot of other troubles too. One thing, we are misunderstood for somebody else's mistake. We are called partisan. We are called aligned. Pakistan thinks that we are not equidistant from the super powers. All this could have been avoided. Today, at the non-aligned conference and elsewhere in the world forums what are we doing? Trying to convince the rest of the world and some of our people also about the Afghan invitation.

It is time for the non-aligned block to take some clear and convincing stand about sending out invitations among themselves, to other countries and especially to super powers. The invitations that are to be sent by the underdeveloped, developing and developed countries are to be prescribed. Care should be taken in attaching strings. Some of the countries have modern devices to see strings even if they are not attached. Such invitations should be divided in three categories. Invitations among the non-aligned countries, invitation to those hoping to be natural allies and invitations to super powers.

In all the invitations, the expected period of stay should be stated. The invitee before embarking upon the journey should take an oath that he would abide by the five principles of Panchsheel. Even if some invitations are misinterpreted and accepted they should go back after the expiry of invitations. In case any invitee overstays, and insists that the purpose of the visit is not achieved and he would go on staying till that is achieved the matter should be referred to the Bureau and Bureau should take steps to see that he is packed up and sent out. During this period, the non-aligned block, the more non-aligned among them, should ensure that others should not take advantage to get themselves invited to that country as that would enhance coldwar possibilities.

It would be in the interest of the non-aligned countries to send out invitations to super powers with the words marked, *RSVP, Regrets only*. If they do not regret and still come, necessary precautions are to be taken. so that the country that invites should remain nonaligned. If the invitations to super powers are for economic aid, the invitation would read better without the *RSVP, Regrets only*. After all one can't go on regretting all the time.

Note: Initial reactions to my proposal have already started coming in. One Latin American country has suggested that the invitation matter should not be discussed by non-aligned nations. Another African country has suggested that in on invitation RSVP should be mentioned. A neighbouring country has suggested withdrawal of RSVP from all previous invitations to make the movement stronger. These may be taken up at the next Summit.

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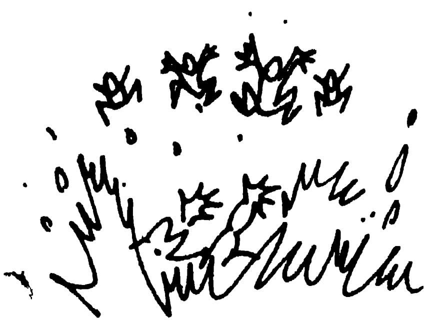


BANGALORE: Dared to do so, the Karnataka chief minister took the plunge literally, to inaugurate a swimming pool. That he dived into the water backward and that there was mighty splash did not go unnoticed by his audience composed mostly of children. Mr T. R. Shamanna, Janata member of the Lok Sabha and his political adversary, who requested Mr Gundu Rao to declare open the Basavangudi Corporation swimming pool challenged him to take the first plunge. The chief minister disappeared into the dressing room, and was back in a trice; attired in a black swimming trunk and splashed in, to the delight of all. Apparently not to be outdone even non-politically, Mr P. Ranadev, Janata member of the Karnataka Assembly followed him into water—*Hindu* (Tarun Rednaur, Visakhapatnam)

NEW DELHI: As a 'security measure,' the Prime Minister's security staff reportedly denied a front row seat to senior CPI leader M. Farooqi, who was to be honoured along with other freedom fighters at the golden jubilee celebration of the Chittagong uprising at Mavlankar Hall on Thursday (19 February). The aged leader, left in disgust as he felt badly treated. The function was marred when a part of the incensed audience shouted in protest. Some raised cries of 'shame, shame.' The Prime Minister who was sitting on the dais was seen pointing towards a security officer to find out the reason. Mr Farooqi had already left the venue by then—*Patriot* (Rashbehari Das, Calcutta)

DORNAKAL: A wireless message sent to the state headquarters by a police constable from here on the basis of a hearsay that 50 persons had died in the collapse of a bridge under construction across Maneru river, five km from here yesterday (24 February), led to great concern resulting in the chief minister hurriedly announcing a judicial probe. Only an hour later when the collector of Warangal district reached the spot could the earlier report be corrected and the chief minister was informed that the toll was only two. Following this, the judicial inquiry was changed into a magisterial inquiry—*Nagpur Times* (N. Ganesan, Bombay)

NEW DELHI: Mr C. M. Stephen, communications minister, likened the ruling Congress-I party to an elephant and the opposition to a donkey. Participating in the debate on motion of thanks to the President for his address to the joint session of Parliament, Mr Stephen said only an elephant could pull a log and not a donkey. In 1977 the donkey was made to pull the log and the result was that the donkey collapsed. Dr Subramaniam Swamy: You are asking for opposition cooperation. But donkey can only kick. Mr Stephen: But our trouble is that the donkey is braying and biting—*Indian Nation* (Om Prakash Dangaich, Bhagalpur)

COIMBATORE: A python has made friends with a hen and they have been living together in cage for months: The python and hen were brought to the Chidambaram Park here by the authorities, following complaints that a snake was being kept in a house in the town. If any other chick was put in the cage the python would swallow it immediately—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* (L. Syamala Rao, Bhubaneswar)

AHMEDABAD: "Reserved" kites were flying all over Ahmedabad. Flying "reserved" kites is latest of the novel agitational methods of the anti-reservationists. And the people responded well, making use of the kites and thread left over after the *utran* on 14 January, which is observed as 'kite-flying day' in Gujarat—*Indian Express* (Veenu Bhatia, Ambarnath)

india abroad

KUALA LUMPUR: An Indian doctor, whose award of about $ 250,000 for wrongful dismissal by an industrial court was recently quashed by the High Court here, has won the money back again following a further court ruling. The federal court has said that a hospital in Petaling Jaya must pay Dr A. Dutt, its former director of radiology, the money in lieu of reinstatement. Dr Dutt, who worked 12 years at the hospital had his contract terminated in 1976 after disagreement with the hospital authorities. An industrial court awarded him the money after ruling that he had been dismissed without just cause and that reinstatement could not be granted because of the animosity between Dr Dutt and the hospital. The money covered losses of salary and specialists' fees owing to him by the hospital—*Hindu*

without comment

As a result of this (the union) budget, instead of 3 million people crossing over the poverty line, ten million will go under it—Piloo Mody

They (the centre) have to beat us up and put us in jail before removing my government—Jyoti Basu, chief minister of West Bengal

The newspapers are eyes and ears of the public, not present in the House—M. Hidayatullah, Rajya Sabha chairman

We are not dead but alive to face any challenge posed by the Congress (I) who not once but twice stabbed me in the back—Sheikh Abdullah

I know it (national interest) is much bigger than Mr (Piloo) Mody—Jaffer Sherief, minister of state for railways

Let there be a caste war. It should settle once for all the issue of 10 per cent people ruling over 90 per cent—Jagjivan Ram on the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat

As 70 per cent you (the farmers) do not have to ask for favours; you have the right to give orders, to dictate—A. B. Vajpayee, BJP leader

After the spectacle that it has made of itself in recent weeks the Congress (U) should in future mean Congress (useless)—Tailpiece in the *Times of India*

We shall continue to sledgehammer your heads until you recognise our rights—Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on his decision to force the Tehran government into recognising Iraq's offshore and territorial claims

In Islam compromise with the enemy has no sense—Ayatollah Khomeini

We are not in an arms race with India, and India should be satisfied with that—Agha Shahi, Pakistan's foreign minister

In many ways, the international situation depends on the policy of the USSR and the USA—President Brezhnev

America's successes will be our successes. Your problems will be our problems, and when you look for friends we will be there—Margaret Thatcher, British PM, to President Reagan

With Prince Charles beside me I cannot go wrong—Lady Diana Spencer in *Time*

Illustration/[illegible]

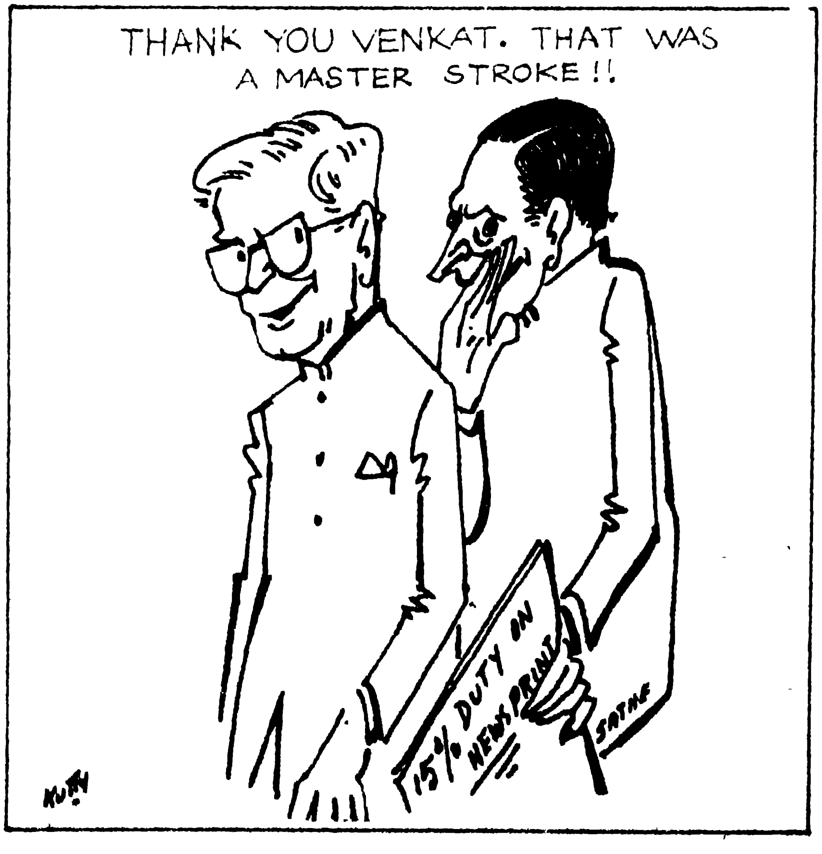
DELHI DIARY

WISE COUNSEL

Did you know that the Indian government hires a public relations consultancy firm for its Washington embassy for a fee of $ 60,000 per year? Well, neither did we, until Syed Shahabuddin asked a question in the Rajya Sabha. As the finance minister's written reply to the question has gone largely unreported, here are the details. The firm calls itself Public Relations Attache International Inc. (PRAI) and has been employed by the Indian embassy since 9 August 1965. Anything significant in that? Well, yes. The firm's chief executive is one J. N. Ganju who was a public relations officer with the Indian information and broadcasting ministry since 1949 and transferred to the Washington embassy in 1959. He joined PRAI in 1965. Now, how big is the team that supports chief executive Ganju? Is it virtually a one-man show set up by a former government employee who decides to strike out on his own and uses to full advantage his contacts with his former colleagues?

Mr Ganju's qualifications—a masters degree in economics and a diploma in journalism—were quite suited for his I & B ministry post but how much ice did he cut in Washington? The minister stated that he was appointed to "achieve continuing American support for India's economic development." After the 1971 Bangladesh war the US government discontinued economic aid to India and direct aid was resumed after President Carter came to power. Was there much for him to do? The embassy itself seems at one stage to have had second thoughts on retaining his services. When his contract expired on 1 September 1979 it tried to find another consultant but failed. PRAI was reappointed on 1 June 1980.

In the last decade Indian exports have faced growing protectionism in the USA and all the advice available in Washington does not seem to have been of much help in fighting this successfully. That PRAI was supposed to provide economic counsel is proved by the fact that its fees are paid out of the finance ministry's budgetary grant The fees paid to PRAI would have been almost enough to pay for the posting of an economic counsellor *and* a first secretary *along with* their families in Washington. The first secretary, presumably from the IFS, would in all probability have been better qualified than Mr Ganju for the job. And the commercial counsellor could have helped out quite a bit. But still PRAI remains indispensable.


THANK YOU VENKAT. THAT WAS A MASTER STROKE !!
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PATRON OF POOR

The Congress(I) MLA from Shahpur in Bihar, Mr Anand Sharma, wants to help the poor. How does he go about it? He decides to construct a *janata* shopping centre at Bihia in his constituency. So he manages to obtain two acres of land from the railways near the Bihia station. But poor people are already living in makeshift houses there. So the services of the Bihar police are requisitioned and the squatterers are severely beaten up and evicted. They are not the same poor for whom Mr Sharma cares so much. This is not all that inexplicable once we realise that Anand Sharma is the brother of A. P. Sharma, union minister for tourism and civil aviation.

THOUGHTFUL PM

If China can have the "Thoughts of Chairman Mao" distributed all over the country at state expense then why can't India follow the example? Never mind that Chairman Mao's thoughts are currently at a discount in China and those who swallowed them in toto are accused of "whateverism." Ever since Mrs Gandhi returned to power the directorate of advertising and visual publicity has taken up in right earnest the task of propagating the thoughts of Mrs Gandhi. In the past 14 months as many pamphlets of her "thoughts" have been issued, all carrying her same beaming image. But there is one difference with Chairman Mao. His thoughts always came in red but Mrs Gandhi's comes in variable colours. Isn't that symbolic?

PUBLICITY FORMULA

Remember when Morarji Desai suddenly sprang a surprise on everybody by claiming that he had a formula for solving the intractable Assam problem and enjoyed a good bit of the limelight? It now appears that all that he had up his sleeves was the trite suggestion that Bengalis in Assam should learn to live in amity with the Assamese and also pick up their language. When Mrs Gandhi came to know what a damp squib Mr Desai's formula was after his meeting with home minister Giani Zail Singh, she gave him a thorough dressing down. The rather straightforward Giani*ji*, who had already agreed to a second meeting with Mr Desai, had to feign ill health and call it off, although he was fit enough to attend office during that day.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

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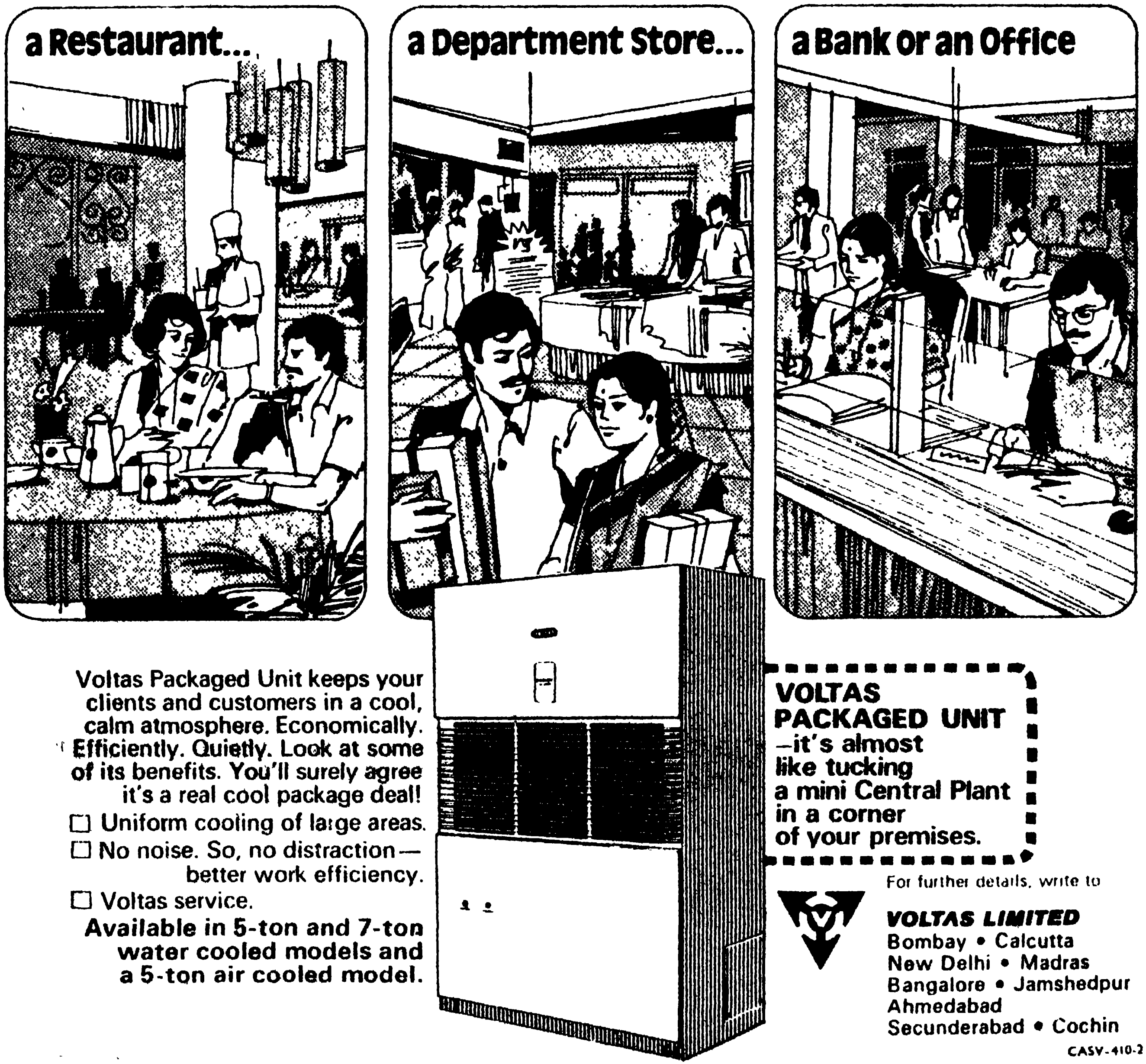
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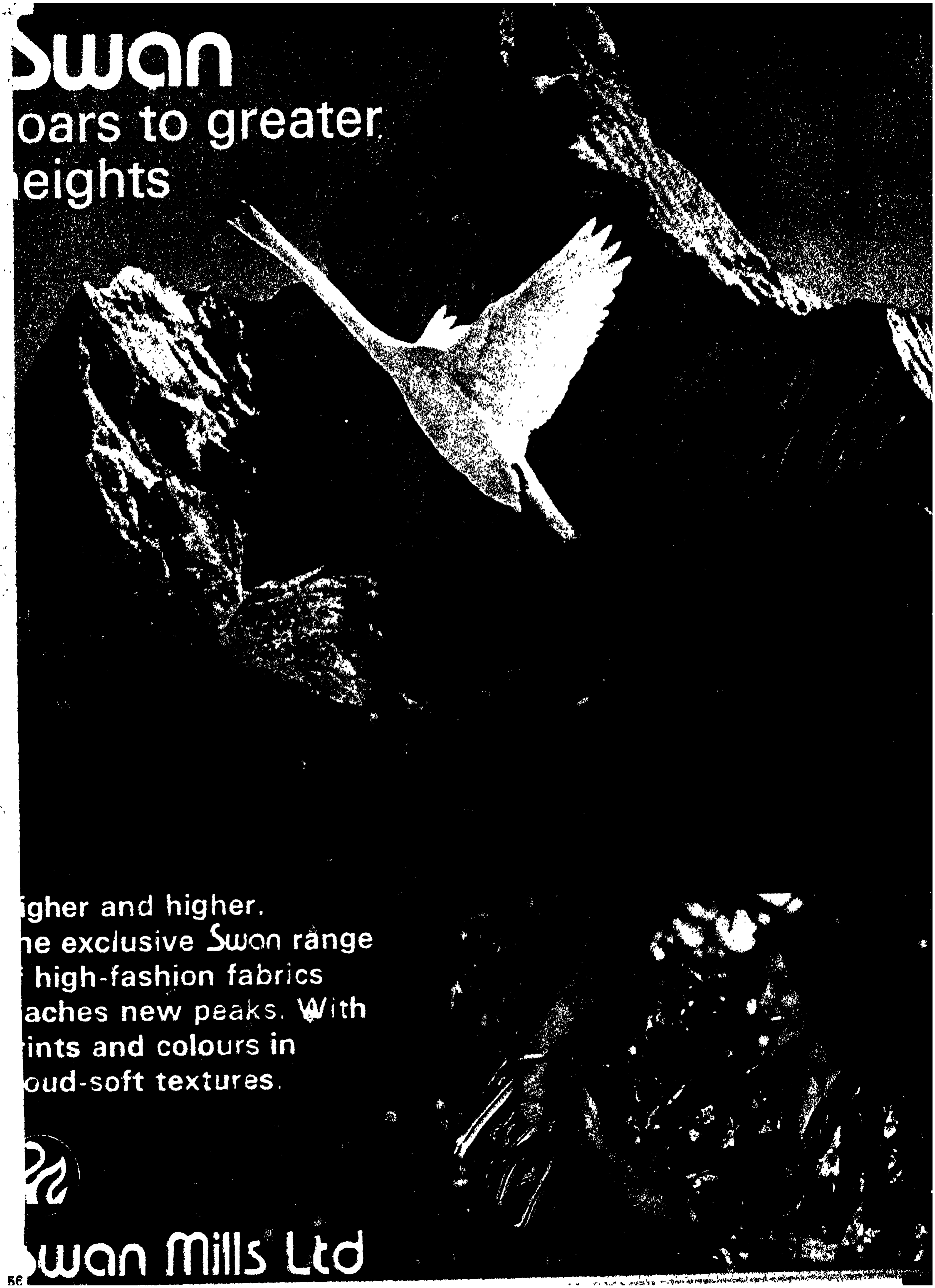

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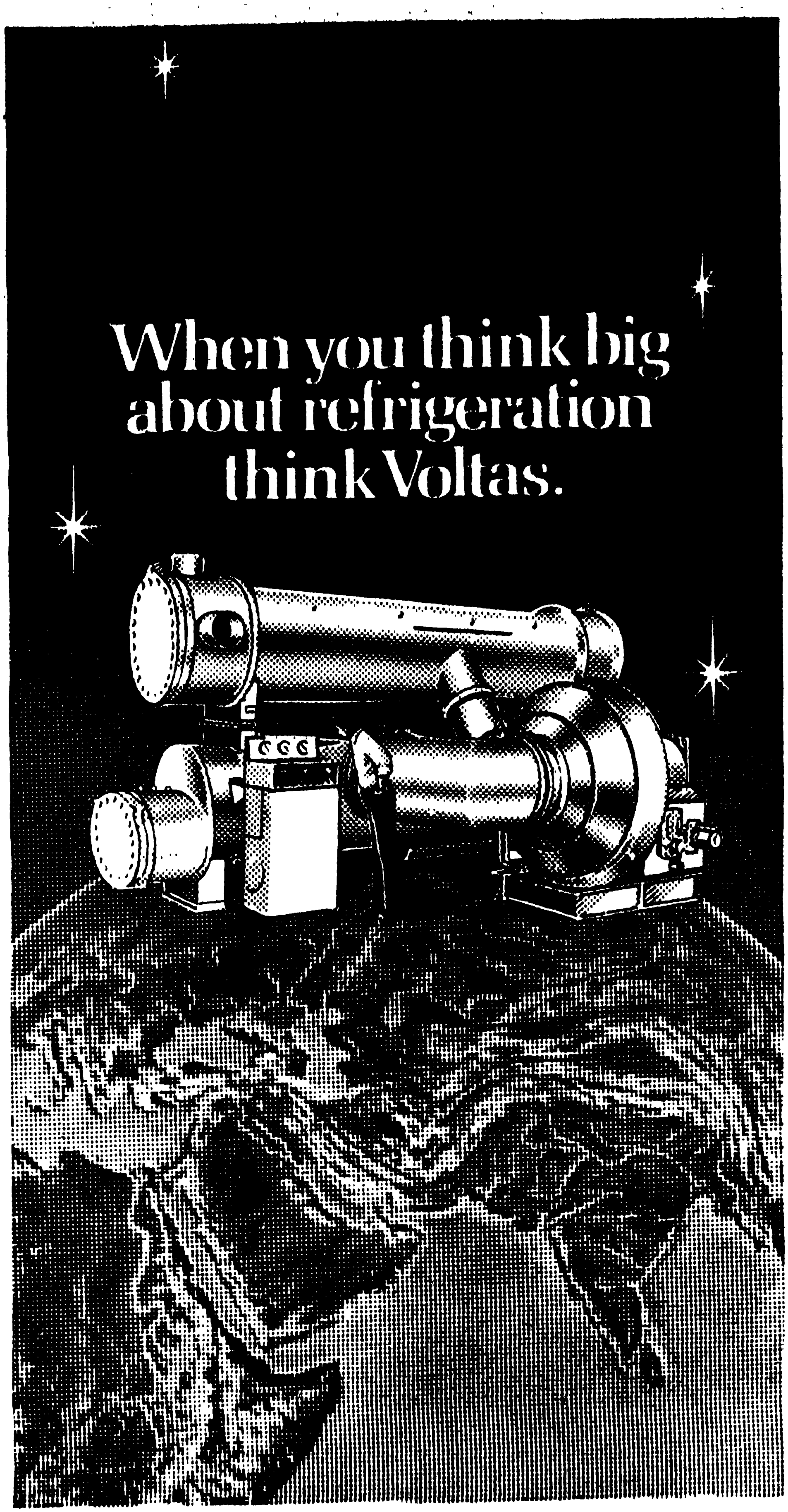
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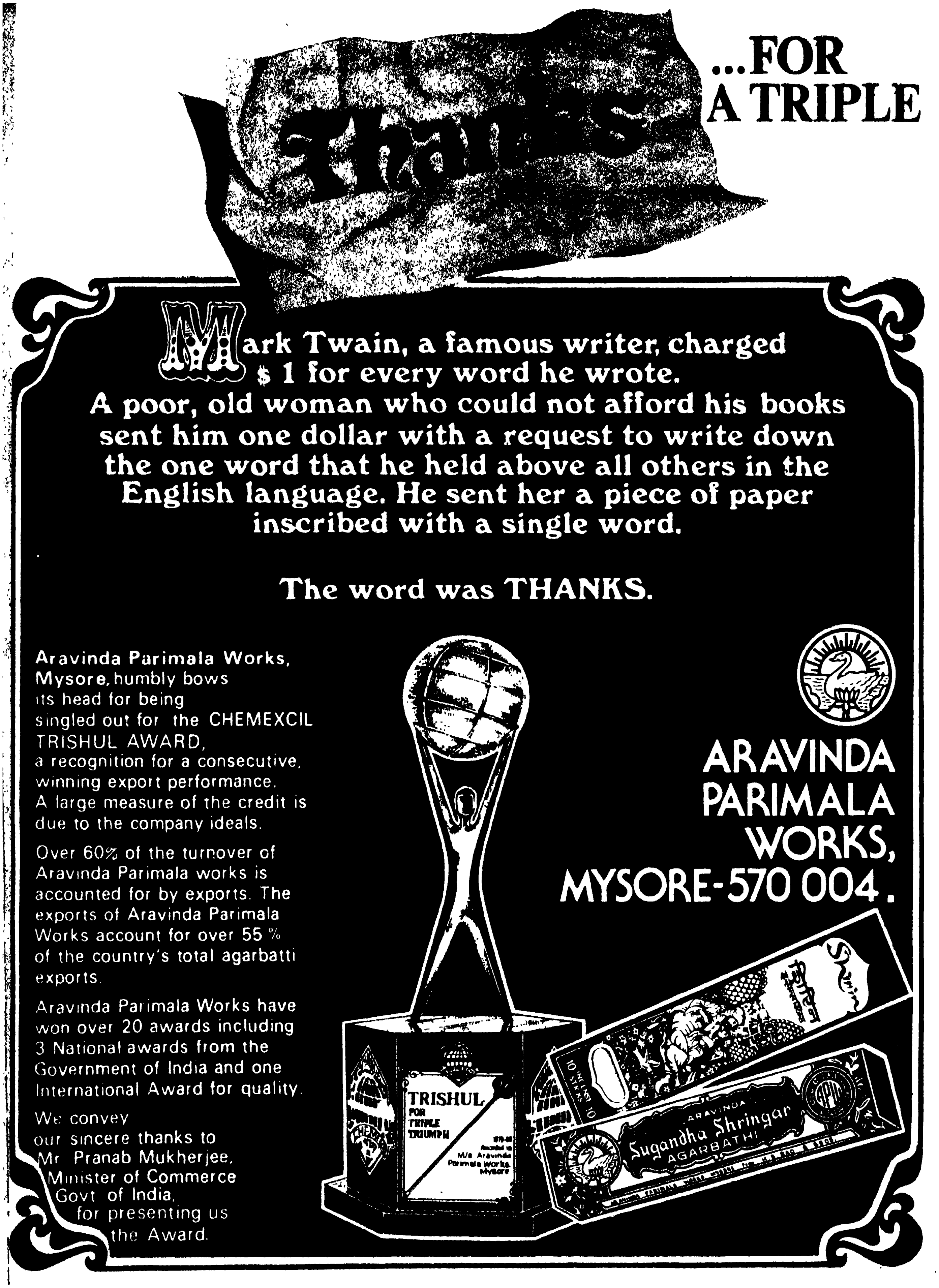

Mark Twain, a famous writer, charged $ 1 for every word he wrote. A poor, old woman who could not afford his books sent him one dollar with a request to write down the one word that he held above all others in the English language. He sent her a piece of paper inscribed with a single word.

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SUNDAY
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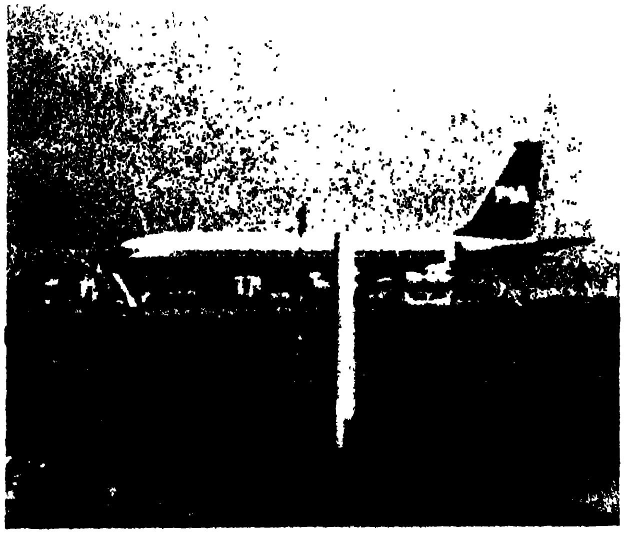
March 29, 1981

A sea change is taking place in Indian cinema. Serious films are at last gaining a foothold at the box office and threatening the rule of commercial formula-films. The harbingers of this change are young filmmakers with modest budgets. Anil Saari reports on the phenomenon. **Page 10**

There have been unpheavals in the country's highest-circulated, multi-edition English language newspaper, *The Indian Express*. Surinder Nihal Singh, former editor of *The Statesman*, has been appointed editor-in-chief of the ten editions of the *Express*. With his appointment, Kuldip Nayar and Ajit Bhattacharjea, the two aspirants for editorship from the *Express* stables, resigned. An investigation in the goings-on. **Page 28**

The recent hijacking of a Pakistani aeroplane by three Bhutto-supporters is more than a juvenile crime: it is a slap in the face for the military junta. Pran Chopra explains how General Zia-ul Haq's acceptance of the hijackers' demands is, for him, a political defeat **Page 22**



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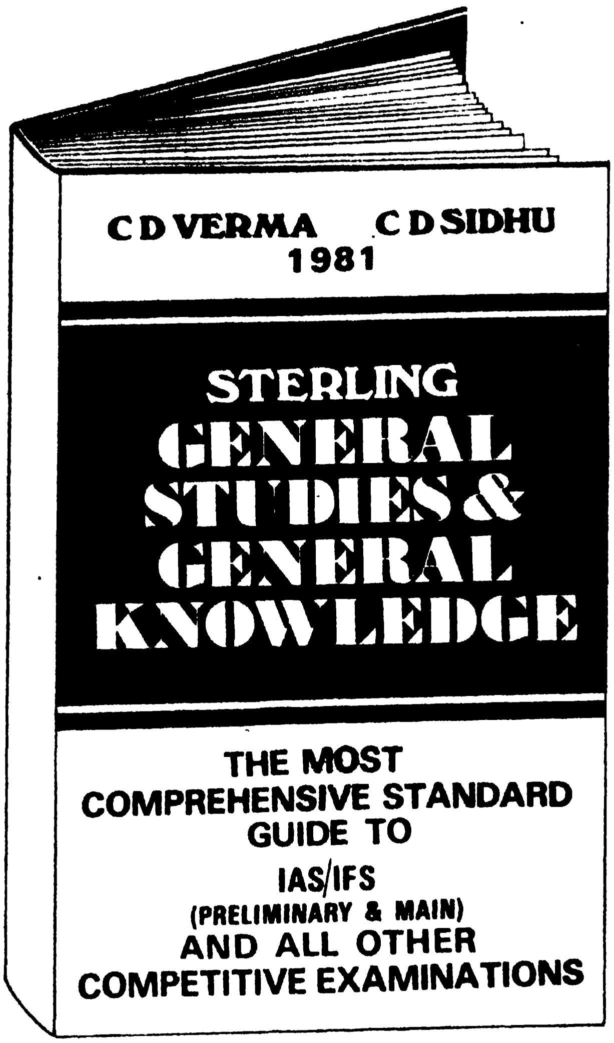
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The Government

Important to import?

When the countryside burns, the urban elite in collusion with bureaucrats are playing the fiddle. One of the many ramifications of the Asian Games extravaganza is a proposal by the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) to import 125 Japanese cars to replace the "obsolete" ten-year-old cars ITDC has at present. But ITDC has not been able to get the new cars for all these years because of foreign exchange constraints. The cost of the cars in foreign exchange would be Rs two crores. The airconditioned cars are to be imported next year to carry the rush of tourists expected during the Games. The union finance ministry officials are annoyed with the decision, but they can do very little about it. The proposal is being considered by the Asian Games committee. Another last-minute suggestion has been made as an alternative to the imports: dieselised Indian Ambassadors.

Politicians off board

Indian politicians will henceforth not harbour ambitions of finding berths in the boards of nationalised banks, mercifully. Some politicians, among whom are ex-MPs, MPs and smalltime public speakers of all hues, have demanded representation on these boards. The banking department of the union finance ministry has examined their demand thoroughly and rejected it.

Businessmen ditch minister

Mr R. Venkataraman

Finance minister Venkataraman is said to be in jitters about the Rs 1,000 crores he expects to collect from the special bearer bonds. He is also sore that the captains of business and industry let him down miserably. It is very reliably learnt that the special bearer bonds scheme was the idea of the elite business corps of the Bombay stock exchange. In December they had presented the scheme to Venkataraman and as *quid pro quo*, Venkataraman was to spare them in the budget. As budget day neared and barely a few crores could be collected, Venkataraman came to Bombay for a day, contacted members of the elite corps and asked them about their part of the bargain. It seems they complained and sighed about the fact that the scheme was not foolproof and that the case in the Supreme Court was like a Damocles' sword over their heads. Venkataraman made it clear that the deficit he faced was Rs 1,000 crores and he needed the money. In his heart of hearts he knows, perhaps, that the big capitalists had let him down. The business community will make the most of the budget concessions and from this they will give him a few crumbs which will still not fill the Rs 1,000-crore gap. All Mr Venkataraman's talk of using the stick if the carrot fails is ridiculed at Dalal Street. "What can he do?" is the common question. He can start his raids, which, anyway, are going on. But tax officials are not above being bought for a few lakhs. Even, ultimately, if the party wants Rs 50 lakhs, the money can be given. So Mr Venkataramn is still wondering where he will get the Rs 1,000 crores from.

When the minister is away...

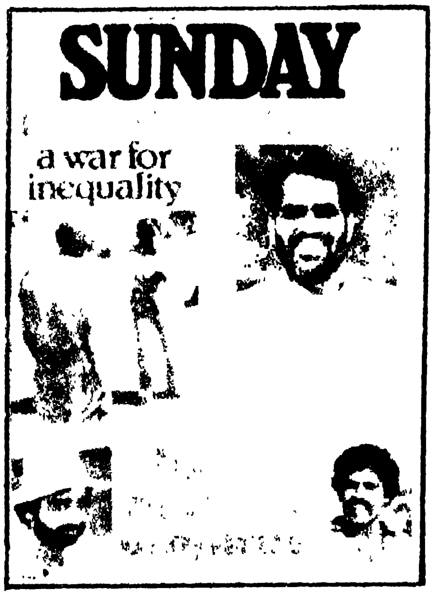
Vanaspati manufacturers have never had it so good. While sugar barons reap rich harvests, the oil manufacturers have been busy working out a strategy to outwit the government, with success. The going rate of edible oil is Rs 210 per 16.5-kg tin as against Rs 160 or so in August last. So, inexperienced bureaucrats in the civil supplies ministry have at last realised that the mere threat of action against unscrupulous traders can get the government nowhere. And having ministers like Vidya Charan Shukla, who is more busy preparing for the Asian Games than doing his own work, is no help either.

Recommend now, reject later

Why the plan for a new working group to undertake a comprehensive review of the work of all export promotion (EP) councils? The government, after all, has turned down the recommendations of two similar committees set up earlier. An announcement regarding the constitution of the new working group was made in the Rajya Sabha by Mr K. A. Khan, minister of state for commerce, on 3 March. The first committee headed by the then economic adviser to the commerce ministry, Dr Arjun Sen Gupta, was set up by the Congress government in November 1976. But the government was voted out of power and the Janata government did not accept its recommendations. The Janata government set up another committee under the then secretary, ministry of foreign trade, Dr P. C. Alexander, whose terms of reference included a review of EP councils. While most recommendations of this committee were accepted, those relating to EP councils were not. Will not setting up another working group be a waste of time and energy? Are there not experts in the commerce ministry who can effectively tackle the problems faced by EP councils and suggest ways to improve their performance? The new working group is headed by Mr C. Venkataraman, additional commerce secretary, and its terms of reference are expected to be announced soon.

Bungled imports

The way the government has bungled the import of glyphosate, an effective weedicide for young tea gardens, shows the lack of coordination among the economic ministries concerned. On representations from the tea board, a decision was taken in February last year to import 60,000 litres of this weedicide. A multinational firm in Bombay—Mosanto Chemicals of India—was authorised to import the stuff and its application was cleared by the DGTD (Director General of Technical Development) and the ministry of petroleum and chemicals. The agriculture ministry informed the tea board of the decision in July 1980. Strangely enough, the multinational was later directed not to proceed with imports of the item. The commerce ministry instead asked HIL (Hindustan Insecticides Limited), a public sector undertaking, to import the stuff a full 15 days after the agriculture ministry conveyed its decision to the tea board. But before HIL could start importing the weedicide, the agriculture ministry decided against it on grounds of 'insufficient technical data about the use of glyphosate.' It conveniently forgets that the multinational was permitted to import 30,000 litres of the weedicide in 1979-80. The commerce ministry was kept in the dark about this decision, which will hit the tea gardens hard.



Wall of discontent

Again, Gujarat is spearheading an agitation which might set a dangerous precedent for the whole country (*Gujarat: A war for inequality*, 1 March). Originally, the policy of reserving jobs was a step towards equality. If this has not been achieved, it is the politicians of yesterday and today who are to blame. Ever since independence, elections have been fought, and won, on caste lines. The line of demarcation politicians drew is now a wall of discontent.

Nothing in the Constitution says that a peon's son should become a peon, or a menial worker's son a menial worker. Every human being has aspirations. Leaders of all parties should stop sitting on the fence and solve the problem once and for all—or else it will raise its ugly head somewhere else.
N. Chandramohan Naidu, Solapur

The report was vivid, and covered every aspect of the current medicos' agitation. No Gujarati or English daily from Ahmedabad has given such an interesting account.
Gaurang A. Bhatt, Ahmedabad

Violence in the home state of Gandhiji, who gave the call for *ahimsa* (non-violence)! Are we followers of Gandhiji?
Fazal Imam Mallick, Monghyr

Reservations for scheduled castes and tribes have yielded no benefits for them in 33 years. Only the rich among them have gained. Is it not time the government reserved jobs for backward classes now to give them a chance?
Perooru Joru, Bangalore

For the benefit of the upper caste medicos, I invoke Christ's last words: "Lord forgive them for they know not what they are doing."
Wajid Ali, Howrah

Since reservations are obviously for the "weaker sections," and "weakness" is a matter of economic difficulties, one wonders why secular India does not change the criterion for reservations to economic backwardness.
A. Balasubramanian, Delhi

Only people like you remember Mahatma Gandhi. He has been forgotten already.
N. Seshadri, Tiruchirapalli

Gandhiji was prepared to lay down his life during his 1932 Poona fast to fight against separate electorates and seat reservations for harijans. He called these the "perpetual bar sinister."
Partha Sarathi Das, Kharagpur

The medicos have a point: why should there be seat reservation in a post-graduate course? Nobody is a backward after he has graduated in any discipline.
P. C. Bhattacharjee, Bhilai

Achieved too little?

Saumitra Banerjee (*Self reliance in oilseed?* 18 January) has used the NDDB (National Dairy Development Board) annual report, 1979-80, which gives the "Summary progress" of the project as on 31 March 1980, to file his report. He has correctly mentioned that the project was launched in June 1979, but at the same time he writes: "Operation oilseeds seems to have achieved little in the two years after it was launched." How has the author been able to review our project's progress over a period of two years using figures relating to nine months only? It is also not correct for Mr Banerjee to state indirectly that the cooperatives are not benefiting poor farmers. Perhaps, he forgot that the project area was Gujarat where the average land holding per grower is more than ten acres in most of the important groundnut-growing districts which the project aimed to cover. In fact, in Bhavnagar district which was covered till March 1980, the average groundnut holding was 13.46 acres (Source: World Agricultural Census on land holding,76-77).

Mr Banerjee has also confused the total amount spent in support of project activities with that spent on production enhancement activities. No doubt, increase of production is one of the major objectives of our project but this is to be achieved by integrating production, procurement, processing and marketing of oilseeds and vegetable oils in the cooperative sector as mentioned in our annual report. Therefore a sum of Rs 3.40 crores incurred as project expenses as on 31 March 1980 does not show the expenses incurred on production enhancement activities alone. The author should have referred to the amount spent up to March 1980 on production enhancement activities as given on page 43 of annual report, which is Rs 7.47 lakhs.
Shailendra Kumar, Deputy Director, Oilseeds and Vegetable Oils Wing, National Dairy Development Board, Anand, Gujarat.

Save Prof. Habib

It is unfortunate and shocking that fanaticism and hooliganism are overpowering a university of such high traditions as AMU (*Aligarh's communal student leaders*, 1 February). The suspension order on Prof. Irfan Habib speaks of the defeat of all moral values. Does democracy mean that if a hundred persons are wrong and only a handful are right, the views of the former will be given precedence over those of the latter? It is a shame that we have failed to protect an internationally acclaimed historian from being maligned.
Anisur R. Khuda Bukhsh, Kalyani, West Bengal

M. J. Akbar has once again proved that *Sunday* is dedicated to objective journalism. But his report misses some basic facts. Prof. Habib is known for his uncompromising stand for the protection and regularisation of services of over 200 temporary teachers (out of a total of about 1,100 teachers), rotation of headship among them, better treatment to the class IV employees and observance of rules and regulations. A number of powerful men in AMU consider his views detrimental to their own interests. Prof. Habib's bold stand for the cause of the teaching community, specially temporary teachers, has been strongly resented by some of the departmental heads who regard it as a challenge to their activities. These elements naturally ganged up to incite innocent students with the help of some politician-students. The unprecedented involvement of a large number of senior and junior teachers of the history department in the recent agitation is significant. In the AMU campus, it is generally believed that the present head of the history department is keen to place his daughter and son-in-law in a higher position and induct his son into the department as a lecturer for which vacancies were deliberately not filled in for quite a long time. Since no bungling is possible with the presence of Prof. Habib as dean in the selection committee, a tirade has been launched against him, jeopardising the careers of over 18,000 students of AMU. Right-thinking persons who have any concern for the university would urge the central government to conduct a high-powered enquiry into the recent happenings.
Ibn-e-Bari, Civil Lines, Dodhpur, Aligarh

I was surprised to read a statement that there has been no theatre in AMU for the last ten years. During the last ten years the AMU drama club team has won a large number of prizes in all-India drama competitions held at Jaipur, Varanasi and Allahabad. There is no restriction on the participation of post-graduate girl students; only undergraduate girls are not allowed to participate. The university has produced persons like Muzaffar Ali, Nasiruddin Shah, Surekha Sikri, Javed, Suhail Khan and Nadim—leading artistes of India—which is ample proof of the existence of theatre at Aligarh.
Maqbool Mahmood, Programme Director, GEC, Kennedy House, AMU, Aligarh

Strange story

It is no secret now that the illegal transportation of rectified spirit (RS) from neighbouring states to Kerala started long before September 1980, from where Arthur Pais (*The south's arrack scandal*, 1 February) begins his story. Mr Pais has conveniently concealed the fact that the liquor magnate Michael Joseph Pappan is a Congress(I) bigwig in Kerala. He even contested the 1980 Assembly elections on the party ticket from the Peeramade constituency in Idukki district and lost to a CPI candidate. It was unfair to have described Ahmed Khan as the "unofficial fundraiser for the marxist party" simply because one of his cousins happens to be a PA to a marxist minister. It was the CPI(M) daily, *Deshabhimani* which for the first time publicised the story of illegal transportation of RS to Kerala.

The story of Ahmed Khan keeping one Zachariah, an MLA, under house arrest to ensure that he "did not withdraw his support to the E. M. S. Namboodiripad ministry" is hard to believe. One wonders whether either of the two ministries headed by EMS in 1957 and 1967 was ever dependent upon the support of the said MLA (As everybody knows, the first one was dismissed by the centre and the second one collapsed due to a change of heart on the part of certain coalition partners like the CPI, RSP and the Muslim League). The daily *Malayala Manorama* which is only too happy to support the Congress(I) has played up the whole issue as a part of their strategy of using any stick to beat the leftist government. The Congress(I)'s bonafides in Kerala are suspect. They have been repeatedly demanding a probe into the affair by a central agency, instead of a judicial enquiry. Remembering the fate of the CBI investigations into cases involving Sanjay Gandhi one can safely assume that the opposition in Kerala is trying to shield, rather than expose somebody by asking for a central probe.

Mr Pais links the demand for sacking the home minister, T. K. Ramakrishnan, to the RS episode. In fact, the cry for his resignation arose because of the Bhuvanendran case, which by no stretch of imagination has anything to do with the spirit scandal. The report says that "an excise inspector intercepted two tankers and checked their permits at Trichur." But the photograph as well as its caption says not two, but three tankers were intercepted at Trichur. The Malayalam word for liquor is *abkari* and not *akbari*, as the report says. Similarly *charayam*(arrack) is misspelt as sarayam.

S. Kuttan, Coimbatore

Big show

Rajiv rallies kisans for his mother (1 March) shows how Rajiv Gandhi has been catapulated to political prominence and how poor farmers were bought over.

Pijush Kanti Chandra, Kharagpur

The "kisan rally" saved Mrs Gandhi from facing the real *kisans*.

Subhas Chandra Panigrahi, Bolangir, Orissa

Kisan returning from the rally: "I wonder when Charan Singh will hold his rally I'd like to visit Kurukshetra."

Rajesh Verma, Gangtok

24-hour tryst with destiny by M. J. Akbar has led me to believe that you are among the few who shed tears about the disparity between rulers and the ruled.

Nand Kishore Singh, Gaya

True, "holding rallies is a bit like riding the infamous tiger." But it is equally true that Iyyappa, the person depicted riding the tiger, is worshipped in the country as God! To many CMs, Indira Gandhi is Iyyappa incarnate.

C. T. Puvi Arasu, Tuticorin

The report showed Rajiv Gandhi's remarkable skill in planning and organising a big show. Truly "he went into the minutest details..." Rajiv Gandhi and his friends hardly slept after farmers began coming to Delhi... This rally witnessed the new style of management being introduced by Rajiv Gandhi in party and government affairs: the 'no-nonsense-low profile style..."

R. M. Agarwala, Bhilai

Among Christians

The demon of casteism (South India's casteist Catholics, 18 January) takes an ugly form in every part of this country. Christian organisations of the USA, West Germany, Britain etc are investing about Rs 2,000 crores in India every year to propagate Christianity. And the ignorant and poor masses are falling for the bait. Harijans, mostly in the south, convert to Christianity in the hope of social and economic equality. Unfortunately their status has not changed. As in Hinduism, brahmins enjoy supremacy over other castes in Christianity. In Andhra Pradesh the situation is even worse: almost all bishops are Reddys and Kammas. It was for fear of casteism that Dr B. R. Ambedkar preferred embracing Buddhism to Christianity, Jainism and Islam.

P. Vishnumurty, Yanam, Pondicherry

Neutral technology

This refers to *The need for neutral umpires* (1 March). For your information electronic technology today is advanced is enough to do the job of umpiring without errors.

A. K. Ghosh, Calcutta

There could be no better headline for the report on India's Melbourne Test victory than *India defeats umpires* (1 March) The Indian team played against the Australian umpires (especially Mr Rex Whilehead), not the cricketers.

Prabal Guha, Chabua, Assam

Sushil Doshi's suggestion for neutral umpires is a good one. But it is the 'neutrality of umpires' that is more important than 'neutral umpires.'

Panchajanya Mahapatra, Puri

Scared, jittery

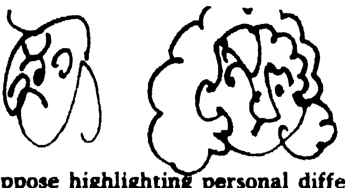
Mehru Jaffer's interview with Z. A. Suleri, the bonded editor-in-chief of *Pakistan Times* (*We dread war*, 1 March) was most remarkable. Mr Suleri seemed frightened by the questions; hence his jittery responses, like "It is a habit with Indians to round up everything so beautifully..." Further, as a confidant and biographer of Jinnah, he had a rude dig at our father of the nation. "Mahatma Gandhi was a master-propagandist."

Lekhraj Dass, 24 Parganas, West Bengal

I enjoyed every line of the ribtickling interview. Mr Suleri's words of advice to all journalists, "place country above self" deserve to be framed and hung on the walls of every editor's office.

V N. Narasinga Rao, Madras

A tragedy



I suppose highlighting personal differences between state-controlled cultural organisations and foreign missions does make good copy, but your *It's weird, anyway* (25 January) is not going to help ease tensions between them. We need a lot more exposure to what is going on in the rest of the world and *Sunday* should try and build up a rapprochement between the two organisations for the future. However, the state and the foreign mission must ensure that the performing groups that arrive here are up to standard. The Cambridge Theatre Company was not. Here is a comment overheard after the show: "The Cambridge Company did Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and it was indeed a tragedy."

Jayant Kripalani, Calcutta

The superman

Rising from the ashes (1 March) proves that Chandra Shekhar is a brilliant leader. He is really a superman in Indian politics.

A Taiyab Ali, Imphal

In the interview with Chandra Shekhar ("*We shall identify ourselves with the suffering of the poor*" 1 March) Chandra Shekhar, with his concern and involvement, showed that he is the only ray of hope in today's Indian politics. Here is a leader with the commitment of JP

Ganesh Chettri, Darjeeling

The interview gives the impression that another rift in the Janata is in the ofting: the way Chandra Shekhar is defending Raj Narain may harm the party seriously Does he know that this may result in the exit of some senior leaders like Surendra Mohan and Subramaniam Swamy?

T. V. S. Murthy, Sambalpur

Last letter

Please start a relief fund for Zeenat Aman; she is suffering from a severe crisis of cloth.

Goutam Bhattacharya, Siliguri

Rs 50 for the last letter

How serious young filmmakers are making good at the box-office

THE HIT GENERATION

BY ANIL SAARI

The impossible seems to be happening at the box-office window of the great Indian film bazaar. Finally, after a series of false starts over three decades, the gum-and-tears cinema has finally made room for another kind of film, which is not a *potpourri* of the Ram Lila and the Mahabharata, fantasies and aberrations, big stars and cliches.

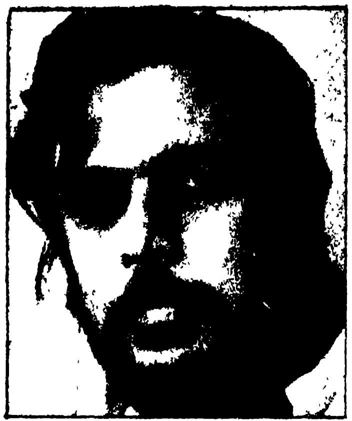
This could well be the year of the new cinema at the box-office, of a quiet revolution in popular taste that has suddenly begun to open the eyes of film distributors and financiers living in their luxurious, air-conditioned cocoons. The average Indian filmgoer is bringing about a radical upheaval in the nature of his celluloid entertainment. The new cinema has already taken root in the metropolitan centres and the big cities, and it is only a matter of time before the influence of the big city begins to seep through to the smaller towns and the provincial outposts. It is perhaps a natural process of the history of modern India. Two decades ago the terylene bushshirt, the transistor radio, the ballpoint pen went out into rural India; now they are entrenched, they could well precede the new cinema into the countryside. Rural culture is getting imitative of city culture; and now that the cinema of *Aakrosh* and *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai* has finally established itself in the big cities, it is perhaps only a question of time before it seeps onto the whole canvas.

This is not to say that the formula-film is ageing, or is suffering from poor health. On the contrary, the amazing box-office draw of Manoj Kumar's *Kranti* should make the lovers of the new cinema more cautious in their optimism about the pace of change. Indeed, there are people, like Shabana Azmi, Shashi Kapoor and Gulzar, who have a foot in both the art-film and the commercial-film camps, who feel that the trend is not changing at all. For Shabana the success of the new films is no more than an irritation for the commercial filmwallahs: "They can just flick it off; money-wise, these films are not in the same bracket."

However, there *is* more to it than the money. The new films—made on small, reasonable budgets, without big star casts and by directors for whom a film is not simply a money-making proposition—involve us in issues about the future of both Indian cinema and Indian society, and raise questions about the kind of films that are going to be popular in the days ahead.

Shaan, for instance may eventually manage to recover its colossal investment (said to be around Rs 5 crores) but surely it is not going to win the kind of plaudits that Govind Nihalani's *Aakrosh* has won from common filmgoers in the big-city audience. *Kranti* may well churn in a profit of Rs 10 crores, but it is unlikely that Manoj Kumar's blockbuster will trigger off the kind of cultural explosion that Saeed Mirza's *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai* has already given birth to in Bombay, where advertisement hoardings and newspaper columns are taking off on the catchy title of Mirza's film. In early February, the popular afternoon-daily *Mid-Day* was inspired to advertise one of its forthcoming columns with the caption 'Shobha Khilachand Ko Gussa

Govind Nihalani


Saeed Mirza

R. Dharmaraj

Kyon Aata Hai.' The same week, B. K. Karanjia, editor of *Screen*, the popular film weekly, wrote a frontpage editorial titled 'Filmi Logon Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai.' Within a couple of weeks after its release at Bombay and Calcutta, in mid-January, the title of Saeed Mirza's film had attained a remarkable distinction: it has entered the language, become an integral part of the slangy, colloquial cultural idiom that had hitherto been influenced only by the big-budget spectacles of the commercial industry, films like *Sholay*, *Bobby* and *Amar Akbar Anthony*.

And to think that Saeed Mirza, as recently as in the middle of 1980, could not sell the film to a distributor at Bombay! *Albert Pinto* was completed by July, 1980, and producer-director Saeed Mirza began showing it to distributors at "trial" shows from August. He held as many as forty "trials" by December and could only manage to sell the film to two and a quarter circuits—East India (comprising West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa and the north-east), Delhi-UP and for one of the three sub-circuits in south India. For the Bombay circuit, Mirza had negotiated the sale of the distribution rights but the distributor backed out when it came to signing the agreement contract. He said that he wanted to pay Rs 10,000 less than the amount they had agreed on earlier.

If Bombay businessmen were still sceptical about the revolution in public taste, there were other people who were not. Film producer and distributor Dhiresh Chakravarty, who has produced Mrinal Sen's award-winning *Aakaler Sandhaney*, not only bought the distribution rights for the East India circuit, he will also be producing Saeed's new film, tentatively titled *Five Star Hotel*, which they will shoot in 1981. For the Delhi-UP circuit, traditionally regarded as one least favourable to films without the usual formulas and *masala*, the *Albert Pinto* sale was "in very strange circumstances," according to Mirza. The distributor saw a few reels while the film was being dubbed—that is, when the soundtrack was being married to the visual track—and decided immediately that he would buy the film for Delhi-UP. This enabled Mirza to think of distributing the film on his own in the Bombay circuit. Having taken a loan from the National Film Development Corporation to produce *Albert Pinto*, Saeed took the risk of asking for an

Padmini Kolhapure and Amrish Puri in Gehrayee

Dilip Kumar's low-budget film

The ultimate symbol of the acceptance of the new filmmakers by the monarchs of the commercial cinema might come about in the not-too-distant future, when the inimitable Dilip Kumar launches his own low-budget film. This would be the first time that Dilip Kumar would be producing a film after *Gunga Jamuna*.

The film's director is to be Jabbar Patel, the maker of the Marathi films *Simhasan, Jait Re Jait* and *Samna* and the man whose stage production, *Ghasiram Kotwal*, had such a successful European tour last year even as a casteist conspiracy wanted to stop the troupe from going abroad. The film's theme is based on a story by the American humourist James Thurber, and it is about a simple, innocent man whom circumstances gradually brutalize him into a violent creature.

The Dilip Kumar-Jabbar Patel connection began a couple of years ago when the great Indian star happened to witness a performance of *Sakharam Binder*, the popular Vijay Tendulkar play directed by Jabbar Patel. Getting more acquainted with Patel's work Dilip reacted by asking Patel why they should not work together. Patel replied that he had a Thurber story in mind, but the film could only be made on one condition, that Dilip give him dates over six months so that the film would be produced and filmed at one stretch. In the meantime, however, Dilip Kumar became sheriff of Bombay and the film project was shelved by Jabbar Patel. It will be taken out of the cupboards now.

Dilip Kumar is not the only major star interested in working with the new directors who take their films and their themes more seriously than most commercial filmmakers take their money. Following Shabana Azmi's return to the small films, Rekha has turned up too, as everybody knows. What nobody knows is that even Amitabh Bachchan was not immune to the temptation. Amitabh was so impressed by *Murder At Monkey Hill*, a Film Institute diploma film made by Vinod Chopra, that, as far back as 1978, when the Amitabh Bachchan craze was at its peak, Amitabh put it straight to the then 27-year-old director, telling him that they should work together on a film. In February, this year Shatrughan Sinha began discussing a possible film with Loksen Lalvani, the award winning director of such documentaries as *Burning Stone* and *They Call Me Chamar*. Sanjeev Kumar, on the other hand, has always been supporting directors wanting to make something different from the formula film. Sanjeev was closely involved in the production of Basu Bhattacharya's *Anubhav* and went out of his way to work for far less money than he normally takes.

The Sanjeev Kumar tradition is now firmly established. Raj Babbar, for instance, accepted a smallish role in Benegal's *Kalyug* though he is a favourite with the big producers who think he will be the superstar of tomorrow. Naseeruddin Shah, Smita Patil and Kulbhushan Kharbanda often work for little or no money at all for the new cinema. Shabana Azmi, who commands a substantial box-office price, has worked free in *Albert Pinto*. For the stars, too, a good film has become something to be involved in; stars too do not live by bread alone.

To an extent this has always been true in the Hindi cinema, though this attitude was so limited in the past as to be almost inivisible. But, as Gulzar says, one reason why he has been lucky to have the support of producers is because the stars have been willing to work for a smaller price in a Gulzar film—Sanjeev, Dharmendra, Jeetendra, Hema Malini and Sharmila Tagore being the most famous ones in this team.

Om Puri and Tapati Bhattacharya in Shodh

additional loan of Rs 75,000 to distribute the film. The NFDC had already given similar loans to producer Suresh Jindal for the distribution of Satyajit Ray's *Shatranj Ke Khilari* and to producer-director Muzaffar Ali for *Gaman*, because by 1976 the government corporation was finally persuaded to acknowledge that it must enter film distribution, too, if the films it backed were to find their way to the theatres.

With additional NFDC support, Saeed Mirza and *Albert Pinto* finally made their bow at two Bombay theatres, on the same opening day that distributor Dhiresh Chakravarty released the film at Calcutta. *Albert Pinto*'s start was fairly modest in Bombay. In a metropolis where big-budget films are released in 15 to 20 theatres spread across the main city and suburbs, *Albert Pinto* found only two theatres, Gemini at Bandra and Liberty in the Grant Road area.

Gemini is presently under contract with the NFDC, which needed a theatre for its films after Lotus was demolished to make way for a high-rise edifice on the same property. Unfortunately, the NFDC has been able to procure the Gemini theatre only at a very exhorbitant price. A 200-seat capacity at Gemini gives only Rs 800 per day to the film producer if all the four shows are full. As Mirza put it, that was the main theatre available to him when he decided to release his film and he had to accept it. Now that the film is successful, he is still wary of taking *Albert Pinto* out of the Gemini because "it is housefull in advance for days ahead." The other theatre at which Saeed Mirza premiered the film was Liberty, generally famous for the trashy films. "We have broken the myth that a good film will run only at certain classy theatres," explained Mirza, who had been warned by friends to stay off the Liberty and wait till he could get Metro, which is not very far off from the Liberty but which has built such a reputation for showing sophisticated films that for *Junoon*, producer Shashi Kapoor waited and waited for the Metro to become available. Getting the right theatres is a very important key for the marketing of the new films and Shashi Kapoor, on this question, shares the opinion of the commercial film industry. But things are changing so dramatically at the box-office windows in the big cities that Saeed Mirza was emboldened to take *Albert Pinto* to a 450-seat theatre in Kurla in the last week of February and to think of getting a theatre in Bombay's industrial belt north of the city.

Before *Albert Pinto* became so fashionably acceptable, its maker had cautiously predicted a four-week run for the film at Gemini and two weeks at Liberty, at the very most. Now, of course, Mirza says, "I have no idea how long it will run at Bombay."

Radha Saluja in Sazaaye-Maut

Om Puri and Smita Patil in. Aakrosh

What has been most helpful to the new filmmakers and their movement has been the fact their films—*Junoon, Aakrosh* and *Albert Pinto*—have done well at a time when other Hindi films were doing badly. In 1979-80 *Junoon*, directed by Shyam Benegal and produced by Shashi Kapoor, went from one theatre to another in each city, extending its run and holding forth at a time when the commercial Hindi film began to sink. 1980 was a disaster-year for conventional Hindi cinema as one multi-starrer crashed after another, creating a vacuum at the box-office which the film industry had no readymade formula to fill with. This led to two significant consequences. First, the big producers, their financiers and their distributors realise they could not bewitch the film audience only by spending a lot of money and by cramming in a number of expensive stars. The glamour of big-money was seriously eroded. Second, as many distributors and producers began to realise, the big-budget films placed most of the smaller producers and distributors at a dead end. This section, which makes for a very large segment of the film industry's population, was on the point of going out of business if it did not come up with an alternative to the multi-starrer.

Some of the bigger producers also contributed to the new thinking in this direction. They made small-budget films which had a different idiom and a different cinematic language. For example, B. R. Chopra made *Choti Si Baat* with Basu Chatterji, and then made two quickies himself, *Pati Patni Aur Woh* and *Insaf Ka Tarazu*. Yash Chopra made *Noorie*, one of the big hits of the year, and the *Sholay* Sippys produced *Ahsaas* with newcomers and a new director. Of course, almost the first man among Bombay's movie mughals to make the best of this new possibility was Tarachand Barjatya of Rajshri Pictures. A distributor of *Sholay* and other big-budget films, Barjatya switched rather suddenly to the low-budget circuit, producing and distributing his own, low cost, films. Risking little in his small investments and making a tidy profit on each of his films, Barjatya did well enough to influence the minds of other big producers towards the same direction.

Along with the sheer temptation of this profitable, low-cost venture, a personal element has also been operating within the film industry, gradually making commercial filmmakers less and less hostile to the so-called art film. The movie mughals have always suffered, in their hearts, from the fact that they have seldom been acknowledged as creative artists, that they have seldom been winners of national film awards and that nobody worth his salt has granted them any intellectual status. Over the years, as new filmmakers like Shyam Benegal, Basu Chatterji, Muzaffar Ali, Govind Nihalani, Saeed Mirza and others have begun to narrow down the gap between "art" and the box-office, the better directors among the movie tycoons have begun to get second thoughts about the new cinema. According to Shashi Kapoor, "the genuine filmmakers in the commercial cinema are only too glad that these new kind of films are acceptable to people. Raj Kapoor, for instance, is very happy about the new trend. I remember when we released *Junoon* in Delhi, Raj Kapoor and Shyam Benegal spent a very long night discussing things with each other. The genuine filmmakers in the industry look upon these films as a strong competition that they must personally face. It is only the synthetic filmmakers who howl."

A still from Albert Pinto

The small film story

A still from Aakrosh

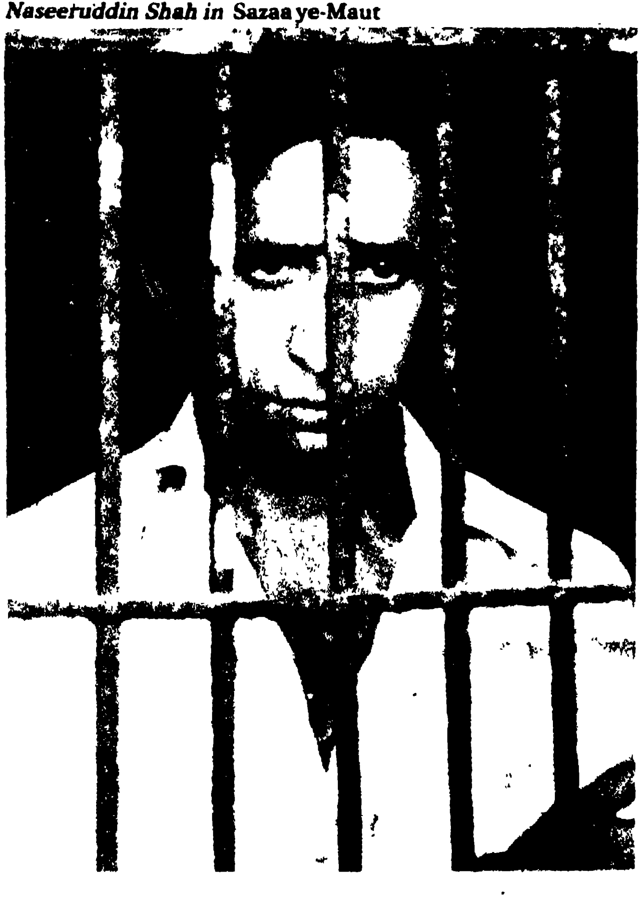
A still from Chakra

Selling a small film is even more difficult than producing one. Big films are never made by the producer with his own money; the situation is exactly the reverse for the small film, which has no financiers in the market. As a result, most of the money invested in small films is either through loans from what is now the National Film Development Corporation (originally the FFC), or investments made by new producers, who come into the film line with profits made in other businesses.

The search for money is always a difficult one for the directors of the new cinema. At the same time, the small film does make it easier for a businessman with a comparatively smaller sum to spare, of say five to ten lakhs of rupees, to enter into film production without having to learn the knotty ropes of the regular film industry.

Producing a small film may be easy for a producer with a few lakhs of rupees to spare, but selling it is absolutely difficult. Most small films lie in cans for months, and even years, before they can find a distributor to release them at even one centre in the country. For instance, producer Suresh Jindal, had to release his first film *Rajnigandha* on his own. It was his good fortune that the film went on to become a silver jubilee success and make Amol Palekar and Vidya Sinha into stars.

Naseeruddin Shah in Sazaa ye-Maut



Even a successful film like *Gharaonda,* which did not depart too much from the commercial film's format, was released only a long time after it was ready. According to its producer-director, Bhim Sain, it was "only after the completion of the film that I came to know the hardship that goes into selling it. It took me six months to complete *Gharoanda* and ten months to sell its distribution rights for one territory. If *Gharoanda* had not clicked in Bombay, it would not have been released anywhere else. This can be the story of any newcomer making his first film. Filmmaking, by itself is incomplete unless you have a total distribution and exhibition chain. Till then filmmaking is only half the job."

Nor, for that matter, do most filmmakers make profits with their first films, even if these are quite popular with the audience. That is the price of learning the intricacies of the dubious business of "exploiting" a film in the market. All that a new filmmaker can hope for, or so it seems, is to learn on one distribution circuit and then make some money from the other circuits where the film is released after a while.

According to Bhim Sain, the commercial set-up establishes a chain of financial investments between the big producers, the big distributors and the theatre exhibitors. Since theatre owners give advance money to the distributors of big films, and the distributors give production money to the producers while the film is being made, a financial arrangement is developed between the three sectors, and even if one film flops, there is enough of an involvement between the three to ensure that the producer and director of the flop get a chance to make another film and recoup the existing with the expected profits of the next venture. A small film producer cannot afford a flop; he gets wiped out.

“After I became a star, my art films have been easier to sell”

Shabana Azmi tells Anil Saari

Q: When did you decide to do commercial films as well? Was it immediately after your success in your first film, Ankur?

A: I had thought initially that I would only act in films like the ones Shyam Benegal makes, but then I decided to do the other kind of films too. It’s very safe to hang on to your position. I think it’s more courageous to go into commercial cinema. That was the most difficult period in my life—the time when I decided to do commercial films. Everybody said that I’d sink. But while I was working in commercial films, somewhere inside me I never lost sight of my personal vision. Today the commercial cinema and the other cinema both recognise my needs.

Q: But why did you decide to turn to commercial films?

A: I realised ... I think things work in reverse for people. I was accepted as an actress but I also wanted to be a star. You can’t overlook the fact that after I became a star my art films (like *Kadambari* which I did some years back) have been easier to sell to distributors. From the new generation directors I never asked for my commercial price. Sometimes I would take only the signing fees that they gave. I have always been doing this.

Q: There was some controversy between you and Manmohan Desai after you had worked in Amar Akbar Anthony. *He was reported to have said he would never work with you again.*

A: What was written in film magazines was vastly exaggerated. We had had a ball working together in *Parvarish*. He’s a great fun person. For *Amar Akbar Anthony* he told me that there was no role really, but I said I would act, because this was Manmohan Desai’s first film as producer. But the success of *Amar Akbar Anthony* did me harm. People were astounded by what I had done in the film—the role was so inconsequential. This reaction made me realise that I could not get away by always playing inconsequential roles. The controversy was created for a short time only because somebody misreported what I had said about my role in the film.

Q: Suddenly we find a number of woman-oriented films in Hindi...

A: What must have happened in the past is that people in the industry might have believed that woman-oriented films won’t run, so they had stopped making these films. Now there is a certain awareness among writers and directors. They are the people who matter—we don’t create the roles. Also, good actresses exist today, so roles are being conceived for them.

Q: Would you say that roles are being specially written for you to play in?

A: Certain filmmakers do write scripts keeping me in mind, or so they tell me.

Q: What are the personal factors preventing you from becoming a big stereotyped film star?

A: It is a question of one’s being more interested in other things. Take the example of Dilip Kumar: he has always been interested in literature and the allied arts. I tended to become much like the others. I was so caught up in work that when I neglected my interest in theatre and in reading, I had a stock excuse: I don’t have any time. This began to work against me and I realised I couldn’t function any more as a person. Today I go to the theatre and I attend seminars. Yesterday (28 February), for example, I did a double-shift and I had to do the dubbing for a film at night. But I made time to drive down from Film City to Sophia College at the other end of town to attend a seminar on poetry which was conducted by Germaine Greer (the famous feminist theoretician).

Q: Do you think that the success of small films like Aakrosh *and* Albert Pinto *threatens the future of the formula film?*

A: It is unrealistic to say that the formula-film is really threatened by the success of *Aakrosh* or *Albert Pinto*. I feel we live in a dream world but the trend is not changing. I find it very disheartening that big films do very well. I don’t think such a transition (small films threatening the formula films) can take place in 10 years. And this reflects the economic situation in our country. I think the impact of the new films has to be made stronger. There are too few of them. A total change is possible only when small filmmakers get into big films, expensive films, and catch a wider audience immediately.

Q: After your debut in Ankur *you did not act under many new filmmakers for quite some time...*

A: I think once I became a star there was a reluctance, initially, among the new filmmakers to cast me in their films. I had to break through that barrier and it was very hard to do this. When they realised that I was being sincere they started offering me roles.

Q: Do you think the new films will lead to a change in the style and treatment of commercial cinema?

A: I don’t think the commercial filmmakers have even bothered to see these new films. They function with a very superior air, but that is not to say that they are ignoring the new films. *Unko tees zaroor pahunchi hai* (they must have been irritated) by the success of these small films but their profits have not impressed the establishment.

Q: What is important for good acting?

A: In my opinion, three basic things are very important: observation, sensitivity and intelligence. One must observe life, have the sensitivity to interpret it and the intelligence to project it. These faculties need to be developed and sharpened with time. I am very conscious of this need to constantly sharpen one’s faculties, to extend one’s own personality, to observe myself and inclucate things and to experiment outside the realm of one’s personality.

Q: As an actress you have a very rare sense of timing...

A: Nobody can teach you timing. One can know the language of acting, but timing is inborn. I realise that experience in theatre helps a lot to improve one’s timing. Maybe because, on stage, the actor has an immediate feedback to his performance and this helps him to arrive at a correct sense of timing. Ever since I started acting on the stage, my sense of timing has changed.

The new cordiality between art and commerce is also the result of a change of attitude on the part of the new filmmmakers, both those who have come out of the Film and TV Institute and those who have come to feature films from other avenues (such as advertising). The first generation of young directors from the Poona Film Institute had a completely different approach compared to today's new voices. Apart from those Institute boys who joined the film industry on its own terms, and who are now lost in its jungle today, the rest of the direction-students took a very hostile attitude to commercial cinema under the leadership of Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani. From 1968 to the late Seventies there was a band of young crusaders from the Film Institute who insisted that the commercial Indian film was no film at all—and that it was bad entertainment, too.

Today, this dogmatic dismissal of the commercial film is totally disowned by a large number of new filmmakers, who believe that the filmmaker must communicate to an audience, and who also realise that it is the commercial film that sustains the infrastructure of film laboratories, studios, dubbing theatres and the army of film technicians. Moreover, there are simply not enough non-commercial films being made to keep the ten thousand-odd cinema theatres busy day after day. There is also the realisation, as director M. S. Sathyu put it, that "if you have to exist, you have to exist with the same trade; you have to see that your product is saleable to that extent." Indeed, it was the example of Mani Kaul's three films, *Uski Roti, Ashad Ka Ek Din* and *Duvidha*, and Kumar Shahani's *Maya Darpan*, that forced younger directors to realize that it was not enough to make a good film if it did not have a chance of getting released.

Aruna-Vikas, the husband and wife team who have directed *Shaque* and *Gehrayee* and who graduated from the Film Institute in 1969, go even so far as to say that "a film is incomplete if it is not seen." They also feel that the effort today is "in fact to break into the commercial cinema really. But we do believe that the commercial film need not only be the formula film. A film becomes commercial or non-commercial if you know your budget and estimate the possible target audience. The target audience is defined by the subject of the film; and, secondly, by the way you've put the subject together. Then, any film which has cost a certain sum and recovers it, can be described as a commercial film. It is not necessary that a film be commercially viable only if it recovers its initial investment a hundredfold."

Anant Nag and C. R. Simha in Bara

There are a number of other filmmakers who subscribe to this distinction between a commercial film and a formula film, believing as 28-year-old Ketan Mehta, the maker of *Bhavni Bhavai*, puts it, that "if you're talking about a certain problem, it has to reach the people whose problem you are talking about. They are not interested in getting bored. But you cannot send them 'un-intelligence' either."

And one reason why 1981 has the potential of being the year of the new cinema is that, apart from the films already released, there are many others that are bound to make a mark at the box-office. Films like Vinod Chopra's *Sazaaye-Maut*, Rabindra Dharmaraj's *Chakra* and Ketan Mehta's *Bhavni Bhavai* which has been made in Gujarati but will also be dubbed in Hindi. These are films that should conquer the box-office before this summer ends, generating as much interest as forthcoming films by the senior directors in the new cinema, such as Shyam Benegal's *Kalyug*, M. S. Sathyu's *Dushkal* and Muzaffar Ali's *Umrao Jaan Ada*.

Let us look at the 1981 and early 1982 box-office calendar from the small film's point of view. In the wake of *Aakrosh*, *Albert Pinto* and *Gehrayee*, Benegal's *Kalyug* hits the theatres in April. Later in the summer, *Chakra* begins the rounds, followed by *Sazaaye-Maut* and *Dushkal*. Another new film by a new director to be ready for release this year would be Ashok Ahuja's *Aadharshila*. And as the year comes to an end, the films that would be nearing completion would be *Umrao Jaan Ada*, Bhim Sain's new film *Tum Laut Aao*, Vinod Pandey's *Nazdikiyan* and two semi-commercial semi-serious films in Mahesh Bhatt's *Artha* and the new film of *Aakrosh* producer Devi Dutt, which is being directed by actor Shekhar Kapoor. And, above all, as the blurb says, there shall be Gulzar's *Namkeen* and *Angur* to contend with. That makes for fifteen films to cover the next fourteen months or so. As if that was not enough of a surprise to shock the conservative pundits of the box-office, actress-turned-director Aparna Sen and producer Shashi Kapoor will have ready for 1981 their film in English, *36 Chowringhee Lane*.

The story of two of this year's hits, *Gehrayee* and *Albert Pinto*, provides us with an insight into the climate of change. According to directors Aruna-Vikas, they first wanted to make *Gehrayee* nearly ten years ago, but nobody would back it and they could not get any financier. It was only after Hollywood films about people possessed by evil spirits became popular in India (especially *The Exorcist* and *Omen*) that people began to ask Aruna-Vikas about the script they had planned on the same theme.

Suddenly the atmosphere changed, and the 'property' became marketable. Aruna-Vikas began researching the subject and discovered that "these things are really happening, even in a city like Bombay. If we had met fifty people earlier who said they knew about cases in which people known to them had been possessed by spirits, after the film was released at Bombay we must have met two

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What the new films are about

A still from **Simhasan**

If the new cinema throws up a big silver-jubilee hit in the coming months, it might be the event to finally force the film industry's big financiers and distributors to begin investing in the small film. Unless the new cinema can produce silver jubilee hits it cannot attract bigger investment. The success of *Aakrosh* and the potential of *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai* have helped to entrench the small film's roots; but these films are not quite box-office competition to the commercial "social and family dramas" like *Aasha* or *Insaf Ka Tarazu*.

Let us take a look at what the new cinema has to offer in 1981: *Aadharshila:* Titled in English as *The Foundation Stone*, produced and directed by Ashok Ahuja, a 1976 Film Institute graduate. It stars Naseeruddin Shah and Anita Kanwar, a talented actress from the National School of Drama. The musical score by Ranjit Kapoor (in close association with the director and arranger-conductor Uttam Singh) is one of the highlights of the film—an unusual combination of Indian and rock sounds and beats. The story centres around young people at the beginning of their careers, and how their values are attacked by society.

Artha: Directed by Mahesh Bhatt, the film stars Shabana Azmi who claims that "the theme is very interesting and very close to me." The film focuses on an abandoned wife and also stars Sharmila Tagore, Smita Patil, Deepti Naval, Raj Kiran and Kulbhushan Kharbanda.

Bhavni Bhavai: Made originally in Gujarati but with the provision of dubbing into Hindi, and directed bv Ketan Mehta, it is a political film which makes very impressive use of comedy, satire and earthy iconoclasm inspired by our folk-theatre tradition. It boasts of Naseeruddin Shah's irrepressible performance in the company of Smita Patil, Om Puri and Mohan Gokhale.

Chakra: Could well be the biggest new cinema box-office hit this year. It is very "Indian" in theme and treatment, sentimental, with a lot of permissive sex and is sure to bring a lump in the throat with its depiction of poverty in a Bombay slum and a raw, earthy flavour. Art director Bansi Chandragupta's sets are amazing; a slum was erected off a Bombay road and it gives the colour of actuality. Starring Smita Patil, Naseeruddin, Kulbhushan Kharbanda and Ranjeet Choudhury, the film was completed shortly before the tragic death of its maker, Rabindra Dharamaraj.

Chusm-e-Buddoor: Director Sai Paranjpye's second film after her award-winning *Sparsh*, this light-hearted romantic comedy has been produced by Gul Anand, one of the big distributors for the overseas circuit of the commercial industry. The film centres around three young men whose lives are pleasantly confused when pretty Deepti Naval moves into the neighbourhood. Farookh Sheikh, the star of *Noorie*, Rakesh Bedi who made his debut in *Ahsaas*, and Ravi Baswani, an eager-beaver of Delhi theatre, play the male leads.

Dushkal: Sathyu's bi lingual (Hindi and Kannada) effort which is going to shock filmgoers once again and make them wonder how the censors let this one go. Starring Anant Nag and Lavlin Madhu, who became a celebrity after her unusually brief marraige to director Vijay Anand, the film takes us to a famine-struck district. Intense political rivalry between the state's chief minister and a minister belonging to the famine-struck region, however, undermines the relief measures. The price of politics is seen through the eyes of a young, idealistic government servant who wants to help the suffering people.

Kalyug: A film that marks the complete acceptance of director Shyam Benegal by the commercial film industry. Apart from the usual Benegal artistes, it also stars Shashi Kapoor, Rekha and Raj Babbar and also some newcomers. It has been produced by Shashi Kapoor with a slightly bigger budget than Rs 500,000 of *Junoon*. It tells the story of two rich and powerful families.

Namkeen: Directed by Gulzar, a woman-oriented film in which Waheeda Rehman, Sharmila Tagore, Shabana Azmi and newcomer Kiran Vairale play four women living in splendid isolation till a man enters their world. The man is a truck driver (played by Sanjeev Kumar) who stays with the family as a guest. His arrival sparks off very different reactions from the four women.

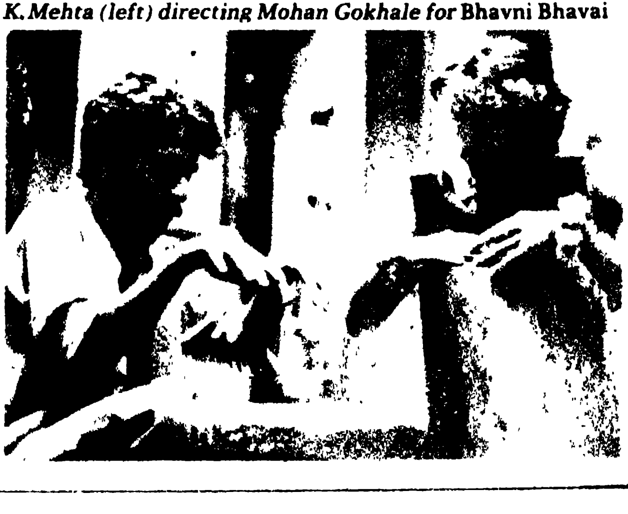
Nazdikiyan: This follows director Vinod Pande's sensational success with *Ek Baar Phir*. Once again, it is a love story which evolves into a romantic, extra-marital triangle. It has Shabana Azmi in the lead.

Tum Laut Aao: An unusual theme handled by Bhim Sain, it has important roles for an older actress (probably Waheeda Rehman) and a young heroine (Shabana again). Bhim Sain wants to star a newcomer in the male lead. The film goes on the sets this summer, with a stint abroad. Bhim Sain's third venture, it deals with the problem of young Indians going abroad because of their frustrations in India. It is based on Mridul Garg's story, *Mera*.

Sazaaye-Maut: A very stylish, sophisticated thriller. Perhaps the first suspense film made in the country on the lines of Hitchcock's and Claude Chabrol's cinema. Produced and directed by Vinod Chopra, who made the award-winning documentary *An Encounter With Faces*, it has a tremendous box-office potential. The director has taken a conventional Bombay-film plot and shown how brilliantly it can be handled.

Umrao Jaan Ada: Probably the most glamorous art film yet, with the inimitable Rekha playing a legendary poetess and courtesan from the Lucknow of an earlier and more exotic period. Directed by Muzaffar Ali, who had an impressive debut commercially with *Gaman*, the film is produced by a big north Indian film distributor who has invested a substantial amount in it. This is the first film that Rekha signed for after deciding that she must establish herself as an actress and not end her career as a mere sex symbol.

K.Mehta (left) directing Mohan Gokhale for **Bhavni Bhavai**



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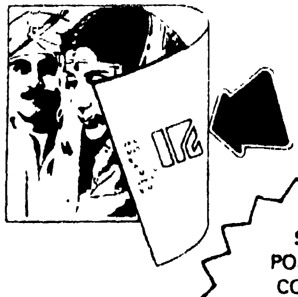

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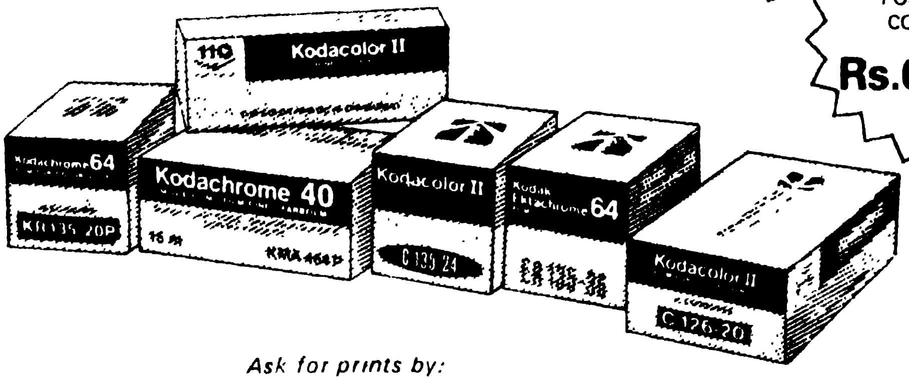

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The story of *Albert Pinto* is unique for a different reason. It could become, along with *Aakrosh,* a watershed in box-office terms, thus influencing the next generation of filmmakers from the Poona Institute. Saeed Mirza, who passed the direction course at the Institute in 1976, made his debut with *Arvind Desai Ki Ajeeb Dastan*, a film which he handled "with a great amount of care and constructed it very classically." It was praised as a serious film, but the distributors simply refused to touch it.

As his first film suffocated in the cans, Mirza realised that he had simply "tried to translate those three years at the Film Institute very mechanically into a film. But when I see *Arvind Desai Ki Ajeeb Dastan* now, I get a terrible feeling of sadness. I couldn't break out of the theoretical framework. The sadness is I didn't take risks with the structure of the film. It became a dead film." And *Albert Pinto* was an angry reaction to *Arvind Desai* and to a cinema that would only "titillate the film aesthete." That statement itself marks the change—and perhaps explains why the directors of 1981 are doing so much better than their brethren of a decade ago. ■

Can Naseeruddin be a superstar?

If the small films succeed in widening their audience and changing the audience's sensibility, they are bound to destroy the monopoly of the two-dimensional, conventionally handsome superstar, and introduce a variety into the faces that teenage adolescent film addicts dream about.

There is a small, devoted and talented band of actors and actresses who often works for no money at all for the new cinema. Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, Smita Patil, Kulbhushan Kharbanda and Anant Nag are already stars today. But they continue to work free, or for next to nothing, for films made by young directors on very, very meagre budgets. Often, as Naseeruddin and Radha Saluja did in *Sazaaye-Maut,* they even put in some money of their own when the filmmaker runs short of cash on location. In *Albert Pinto* Naseeruddin even paid for the petrol for the motorbike in the scene in which he takes Shabana Azmi for a ride through Bombay. As *Bhavni Bhavai* director Ketan Mehta put it, these are people who want to act in films for the cause rather than for the money: they believe in these films, too, and in their future.

It is not surprising that the same stars are to be seen in so many of these small films because of the relationships that develop, the goodwill generated and the fraternal spirit that is developed between the artistes and the young directors.

Naseeruddin Shah probably has more roles in these new films than any other artiste. And if the films click at the box-office they would in turn boost Naseer as a major box-office draw. He is already accepted as a very talented actor and can easily develop into a major star like Sanjeev Kumar. But can he ever come into the big race as the superstar successor to Amitabh Bachchan? This is a question that might well be asked at the end of the year when Naseer's performances in *Albert Pinto, Bhavni Bhavai, Sazaaye-Maut, Chakra* and *Aadharshila* have been seen by filmgoers in most major cities and towns.

The film industry's experts are convinced today that Naseeruddin will always remain a character artiste. They think his looks limit him to side-roles in the big commercial films and they cannot see him becoming a star bigger than Sanjeev Kumar; Sanjeev has played the hero in so many commercial films. Naseeruddin, they feel, will never have the opportunity to play the lead in as many commercial films as Sanjeev Kumar has had. Naseer's admirers, too, like director Ketan Mehta, wonder whether the young actor would ever submit to the rather dehumanised conditions which a superstar has to accept. According to Ketan, a superstar has to be very tolerant of other people's attitudes and adjust himself to the values pervading the commercial set up; he must accept the image thrust upon him and conform to it very noticeably. Naseer would not allow himself to be transformed into a synthetic personality—a necessity for a superstar. He further points out that in the commercial films that Naseer has done, such as *Khwab* and *Sunaina,* the actor has never given the impression of being comfortable while doing the scenes he had to do.

But, the fact remains that many of the new films are assaulting the box-office quite directly and if these films succeed will they not transform their leading man into a big star? Especially since the concept of the superstar has changed considerably in the last decade? When Rajesh Khanna became a superstar in the first half of the Seventies, the experts of the film industry talked about his having "chinky" eyes and pimples on his face. During Rajesh's heydays, Amitabh Bachchan was dismissed as an awkwardly tall and skinny man with a hungry look on his lean face. Yet, by the middle of the Seventies, Amitabh made his negative points into the most saleable commodity. Good looks, especially the chocolate-faced look, cannot be considered necessary anymore for the superstar. Instead, what has become important is whether an actor's films succeed in making his personality representative of the indefinable, unconscious mood of the collective psyche of the Indian people. Raj Babbar had better watch out. It might just be Naseeruddin Shah, and not Rishi Kapoor or Mithun Chakravarty or Raj Kiran or Kumar Gaurav or Sanjay Dutt, who might challenge Babbar in the next superstar race—a race that is already on.

Naseeruddin Shah in Bhavni Bhavai

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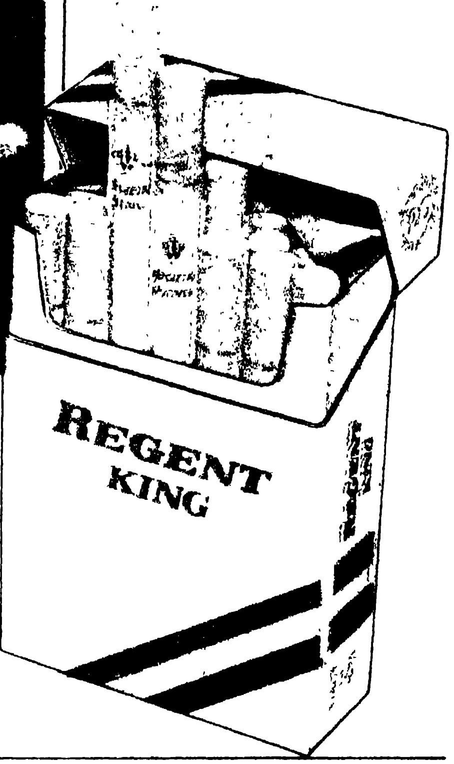

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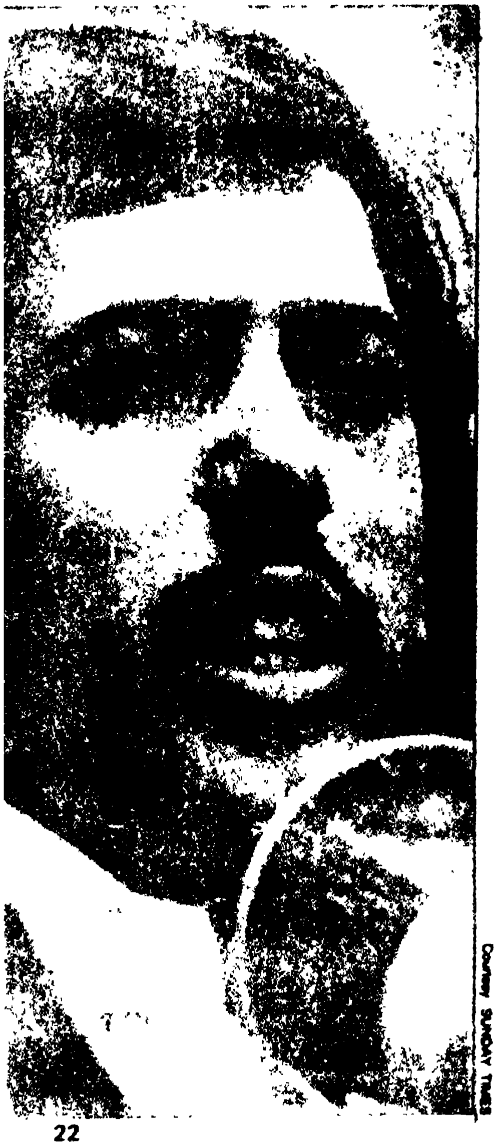
Murtuza Bhutto

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's son, who masterminded the hijacking of the PIA plane, has finally grown up. But was the hijacking only a pyrrhic victory?

Until early 1979, Murtuza Bhutto, eldest son of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, behind the convenient excuse that he was doing a thesis on international relations at Christ Church, Oxford University, generally spent his time chasing girls and partying. It was the comfortable life of a rich playboy, not unknown in the Bhutto tradition, while his mother and his famous sister Benazir carried on the more arduous task of a political battle to save their father's life. Then one day Murtuza Bhutto also realised that Zia might actually go to the extent of killing his father. In January 1979 he toured the Muslim world and got numerous heads of state to send messages to Zia pleading for Bhutto's life. But he was in London on a February weekend when he read in the newspapers that the Pakistan Supreme Court had confirmed the death sentence.

Murtuza Bhutto



Courtesy SUNDAY Times

On 4 April Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged in Rawalpindi. That night a "coldly angry" Murtuza Bhutto became a different person. He was 24 then, and after 4 April 1979 no one quite knew what he was up to. But it was clear that he was building an anti-Zia movement of his own, probably without permission or sanction from his mother Nusrat Bhutto. He spent some time in Libya towards the end of 1979, and a few weeks in Damascus. But he chose to settle down, very significantly, not in any of the overtly Muslim capitals of the world, but in Kabul—which was under Russian control. Obviously Murtuza Bhutto had, through the Afghans, reached an understanding with the superpower on the doorstep of Pakistan. He is living today in a bungalow in the Akbar Khan Mena quarter of Kabul, just opposite the former royal palace and now Babrak Karmal's residence, and this is where he runs his international terrorist organisation aimed at throwing out the man he hates, President Zia of Pakistan.

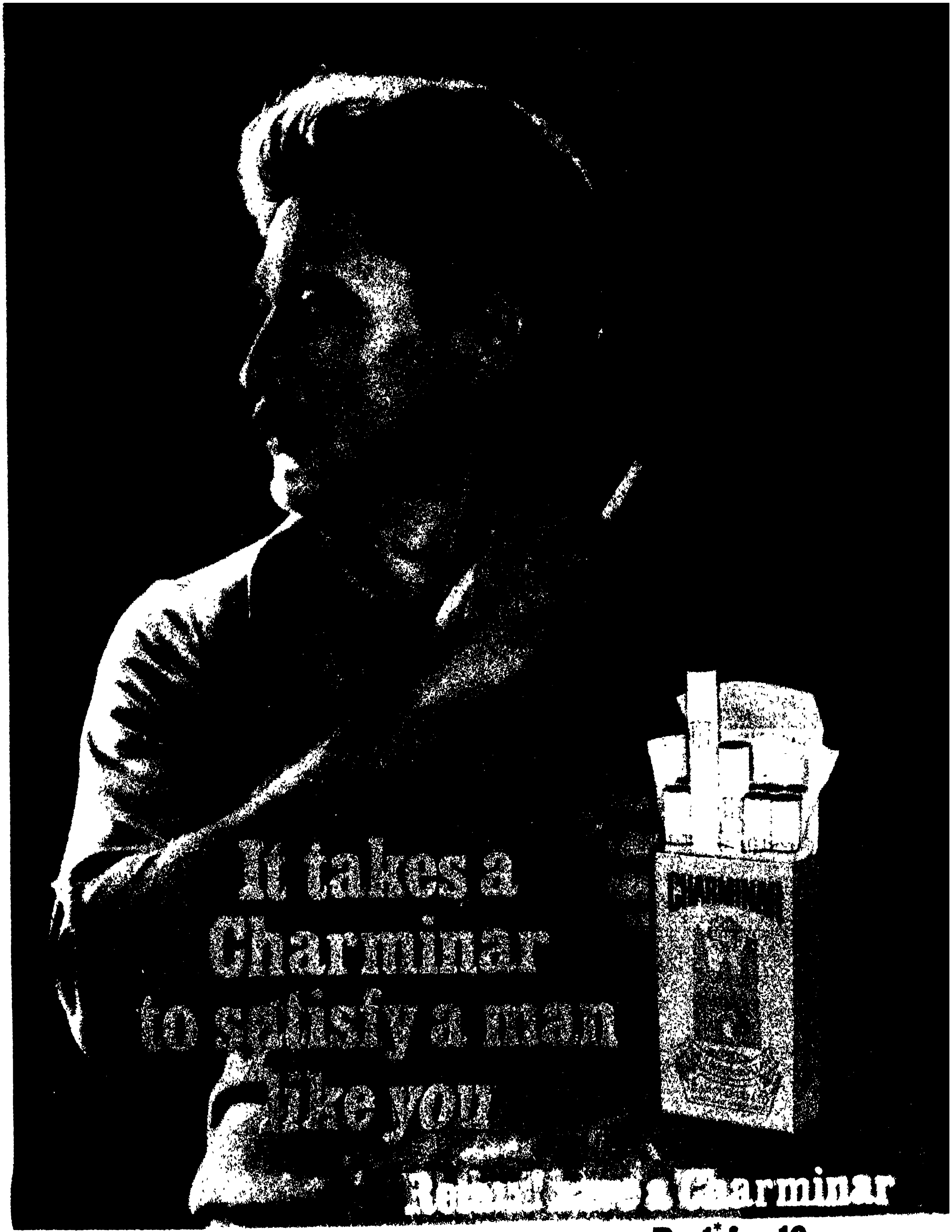
During the past year, the People's Liberation Army of Murtuza Bhutto (his younger brother Shahnawaz is apparently not very involved in this dangerous game) has collected a core of 50 or so soldiers in Kabul. They have enough money—apart from what sympathetic regimes might provide, Bhutto surely had a sizeable sum stashed away in a Swiss bank—but their weapons are said to be still comparatively primitive. However, at a moment of need, for instance when the hijacked PIA airliner was in Kabul, the required weaponry does manage to turn up, so one supposes that is not the most important of the PLA's (The hijackers obtained fresh supplies of arms at Kabul airport, presumably from the Afghans) problems. Murtuza Bhutto is not exactly in hiding in Afghanistan; he has been seen quite openly at official functions by diplomats. And on 12 September last year he even issued a tough nine-page handwritten statement on crested notepaper, promising that he would not let Zia live in peace. The Pakistani authorities should have read that statement carefully: in it a clear threat was made against PIA planes.

The hijacking was not the first operation of the PLA. It has, with the help of Afghan soldiers, ambushed and attacked regular Pak army units on the border, and even crossed frontiers to destroy a goods train at Multan. The PLA has been modelled on Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and divided into two wings, the political and military. The political division is handled by 33-year-old Raja Anwar, former adviser on student affairs to Bhutto. And the military division is commanded by 26-year-old student Sohail Sehti, who has given himself the Frederick Forsythe-style codename of the Wolf. Sehti has named his wing Al-Zulfikar, or The Sword: obviously the name also denotes loyalty to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. (Incidentally the People's Party symbol was also a sword.) Training has been provided to these terrorists mainly by defecting Pak army officers; claims have also been made of such help from Libya.

The Pak authorities were, it seems, quite aware that a hijacking effort would be made. Two weeks before the hijacking, one London-bound PIA jet was suddenly prevented from taking off at Karachi, and a thorough search made. There were no hijackers on that flight, but two weeks later, as we all know now, an internal flight to Peshawar was hijacked (much to the particular consternation of 12 of the passengers, who were Afghan rebels who had escaped to Pakistan; the thought of being taken to Kabul must have scared the hell out of them. Incidentally, they too returned safely to Pakistan).

Murtuza Bhutto once called 'Baby' derisively, was waiting at Kabul airport for the hijacked plane to land. The 'Baby' had grown up, and was in the big leagues now. The Afghan authorities were aware that a hijacked Flight 326 was coming in—among other things, the Russian MiGs, which would surely have escorted an unidentified plane to the tarmac, remained on ground.

There is debate about whether Murtuza Bhutto's success with the hijacking has been a pyrrhic victory. The popular opposition to Zia in Pakistan had been gaining momentum in the past month and once again, after a long while, students had begun dying on the streets from army bullets. But the hijacking, and the open Russian support (which is not very liked in Pakistan, either by the ruling party or the opposition), may have well been a setback to the opposition. But 'Baby' Bhutto's achievement is that the game of position and opposition has been escalated now to uncertain heights, and no one knows who is safe any more. President Zia-ul Haq's sleep cannot be particularly peaceful these days.



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ZIA TOTTERS

BY PRAN CHOPRA

HOW fragile the regime of General Zia has grown was well shown up during the weeklong drama of the hijacking of a Pakistani plane. The expectation grew wild among Pakistan-watchers that whether General Zia accepted or rejected the demands of the hijackers, his own fate would be sealed. The point is not whether the expectation was correct (it was probably not). But that it existed and was widespread is a measure of the loss of credibility that he has suffered. The General himself betrayed anxiety about his future when he ordered the wholesale arrest of all his political opponents. He denied any connection between the arrests and the hijacking, but he did not convince anyone.

General Zia began the week by refusing to bend at all to the hijackers' demand for the release of the political prisoners, numbering over 90, listed by them. If he had stuck to this position and the plane had been blown up in retaliation, he would have faced vehement resentment from two quarters: from the friends and relatives of the deceased passengers, and from the supporters of the prisoners whose release was being demanded by the hijackers.

But he would also have won the applause of those—and there are innumerable such inside as well as outside Pakistan—who regard hijacking as a particularly reprehensible form of blackmail and do not favour any compromise with it (so long, that is, as they are not personally affected!) The General's reputation for sternness, which is an invaluable part of the armoury of a military dictator, would have been further enhanced, whatever the cost to the deceased passengers and the disappointed prisoners.

The rounding up of a large number of political opponents would also have been defended by some people as a legitimate precaution against political exploitation of the shock and confusion which the blowing up of the plane would have certainly created in the public mind for a period of time. Of course he made cynical use of the occasion for rounding up political heavyweights like Begum Nusrat Bhutto (whom but for this opportunity he might have hesitated to touch) by drumming up the real or imaginary connection between the People's Party of Pakistan (PPP), founded by her husband the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and the hijackers who claim to belong to a movement the name of which they have given as "Al-Zulfikar." But then cynicism is a familiar weapon of power, even democratic power.

But Zia lost these possible advantages of firmness when he agreed to release some prisoners. By this he made himself vulnerable to attack whichever way he moved, whether he surrendered to the blackmail of the hijackers or paid the price, the blowing up of the plane, for refusing to release more prisoners. In the latter event he would have been blamed for being so blinded by his hatred of his opponents that he would rather let a hundred Pakistanis die in the blazing inferno of a burning plane than release a couple of dozen political prisoners, none of them of any great consequence and all of them distinguished only by their political convictions from the other prisoners he was offering to release anyhow.

Surrendering to the hijackers' demands also had its high costs and consequences, and these the General must face now along with the other threats to his power. By his own actions he established a connection in the public mind between the hijackers and Bhutto's PPP. For example by arresting Mrs Bhutto and her daughter, Benazir Bhutto, and more particularly by statements made through official spokesmen that Murtuza Ali Bhutto, the late Prime Minister's son, was travelling with the hijackers on board the plane. He also implied some involvement of the Kabul regime with the hijackers, because official Pakistani sources insist that the hijackers received arms and other material while they were holding the plane at the Kabul airport.

Therefore his "surrender" to the demands of the hijackers, which he has publicly described as such, must now seem to the people to be a surrender to his political enemies also. It may be unfair to him that people should think so. But that does not soften the blow this means to his power. A beleaguered dictatorship, divorced from the mainstream of popular political opinion, which it considers to be irrelevant anyhow, cannot afford setbacks, especially setbacks in terms of an unsuccessful display of power; it can only survive on success and sternness. But this is precisely the kind of setback he has suffered. It is more serious than the tiff he has picked up with Pakistan's erstwhile financier and backer, the Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi, or the further sourness he has added to the problems he already has with Kabul.

This setback follows close upon the heels of another he suffered a few days earlier: the failure of his intention, announced with some fanfare, to give his government a credible civilian face. No one of any importance responded to his invitation to join his government. Understandably, the major political parties and forces, most of whom have banded together in a movement to overthrow him and restore democracy, were excluded from the invitation. But even parties which are not members of the movement,

Zia-ul Haq

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Z. A. Bhutto

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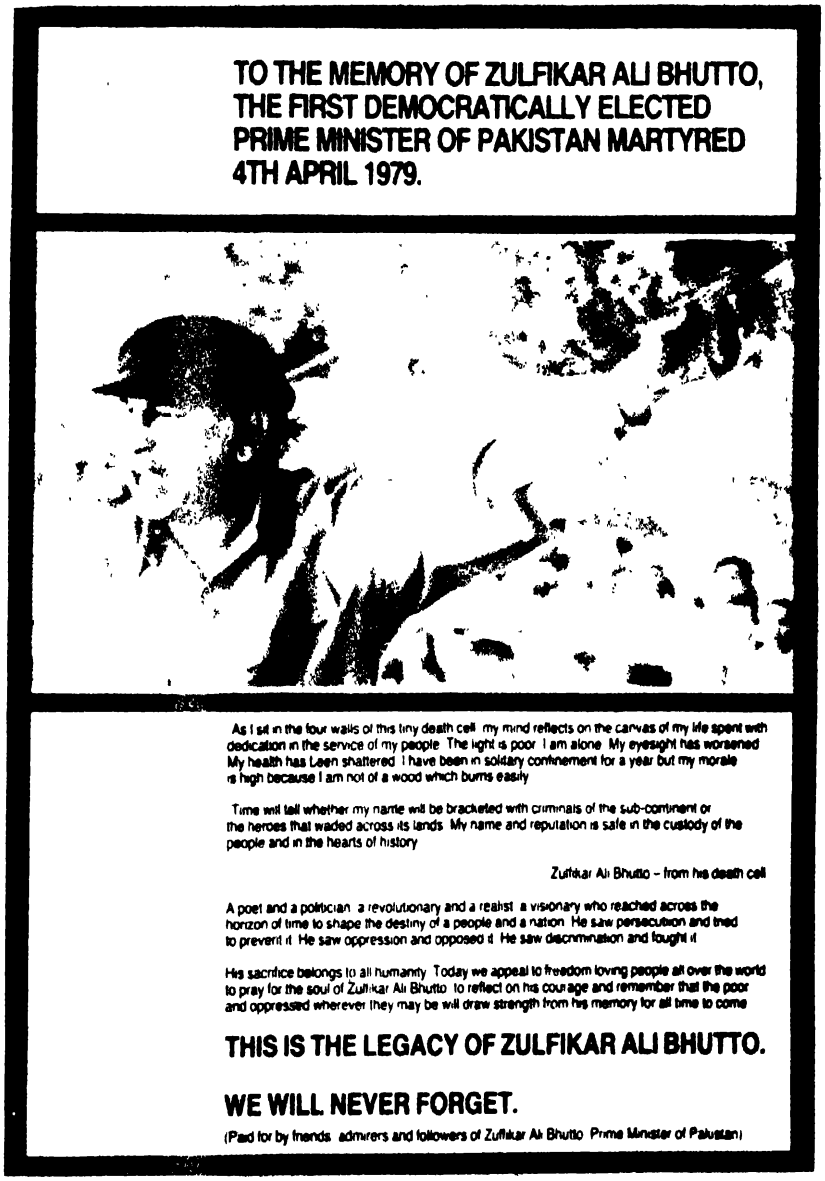

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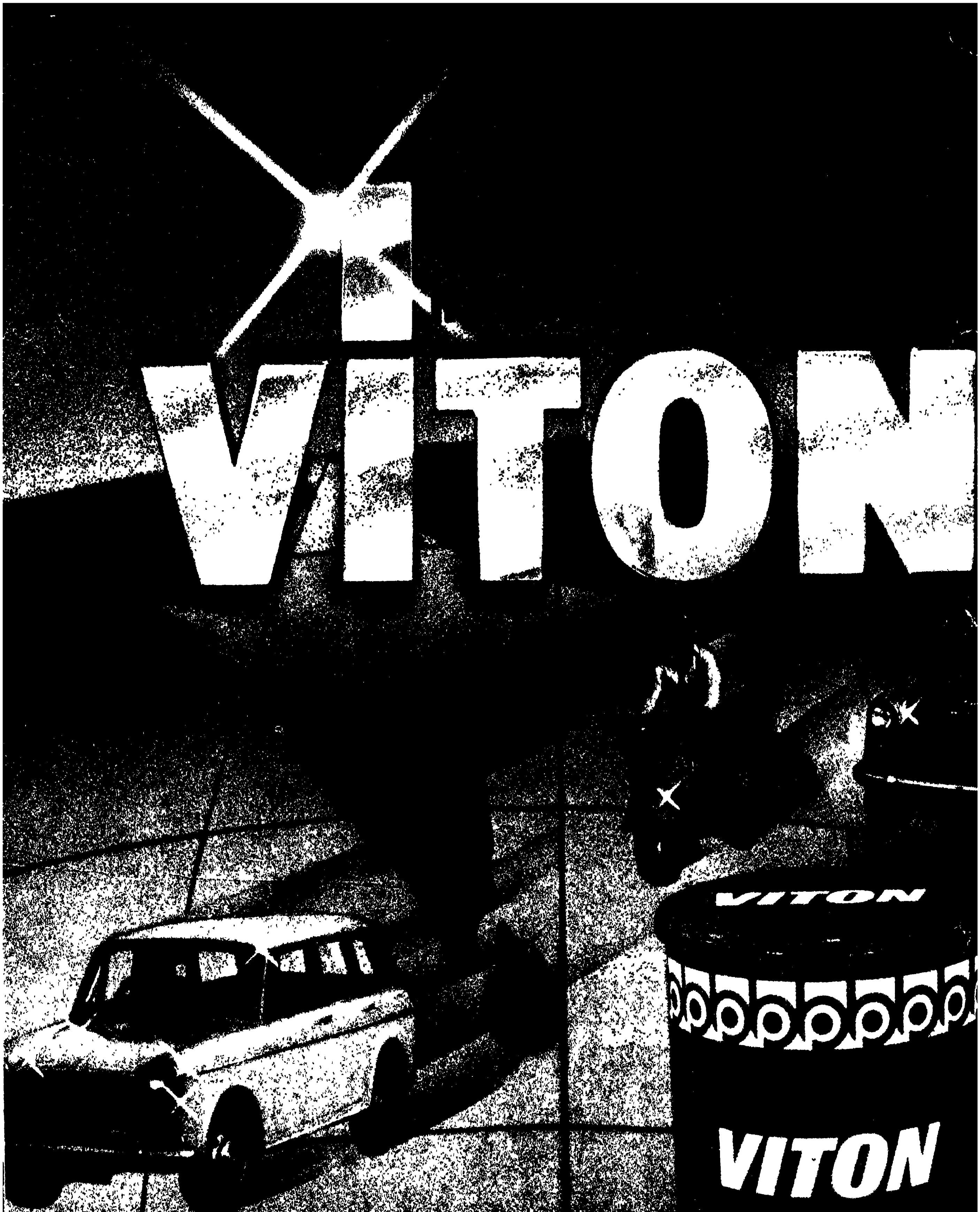
have in the past given him at least some backing, and were approached by him this time too, have either refused to join the government or have sent in only their second-rank leaders. They must have reckoned the political costs of too close an association with him to be rather high.

All this must weigh against General Zia in the scales of his future. And all this must give encouragement to his political opponents on the one hand and on the other hand it must give second thoughts to those leaders of the armed forces who have hitherto given him their backing. Therefore his displacement is on the cards. But it will probably not come very soon and when it does come the ruling regime will only change its face, not its nature.

First of all, General Zia has two things going for him still. One is that he is still in the saddle, which means that he still has the power to neutralise one rival general's ambition with another rival general's, and by shuffling around the more suspicious of his colleagues he can break up opposing formations if he can detect them in time. The second thing is that no one probably feels too enthusiastic about sitting in his chair so long as the chair cannot get rid of two of its most troublesome bugs, the American pressure upon Pakistan to pursue policies towards Afghanistan which Pakistan knows it cannot afford, and the continuing influx of refugees from Afghanistan, whose future continues to be the subject of a very dangerous stalemate.

When the change does come it will only be from one general to another. There will neither be a colonel's revolution nor a return to political democracy. Notwithstanding the Bhutto interlude, the power elite in Pakistan continues to be anchored in social classes in which the predominant element is the senior leadership of the army. It not only controls the most immediately effective power structure, namely the armed forces, but also has extensive and highly influential linkages with the landed aristocracy and the captains of industry and commerce, which are the only other power structures which are intact.

The army leaders are aware of the threat of larger political forces· the threat of a growing demand for the restoration of democracy and the threat from across the Afghan border. In fact their major reason for dissatisfaction with General Zia will be his inability to deal with these threats the way they would have wanted him to. But this awareness will delay rather than hasten their moves against General Zia, and will make them redouble their efforts to see that the moves, when they are made, are not made in such a way as to weaken the citadels of army power.Therefore the democratic forces not only have the present military ruler ranged against them but also at least a couple of his successors, who too will be senior army officers. The days of democracy are distant yet ■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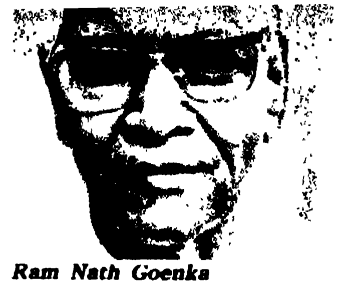


Ram Nath Goenka

Riddles of the INDIAN EXPRESS

How does the charismatic owner of the Express group behave with his editors? Anil Saari finds out.

It was afternoon on 13 March, on an ordinary working day in newspaper offices, when a UNI flash clattered over the teleprinters, saying that Surinder Nihal Singh, former editor of *The Statesman*, was going to take over as the next editor-in-chief of *The Indian Express*, the largest-circulated English-language multi-edition daily in the country. And this was news; nobody, had any inkling, before the decision was made days earlier, that this was going to happen. Particularly not the big names in journalism who have served Ram Nath Goenka's newspaper for so long, names like Kuldip Nayar and Ajit Bhattacharjea.

The news threw the Delhi office of the *Express* into confusion; this was a genuine bolt, as they say, from the blue. The question that everyone began asking was the inevitable one: what would happen to Bhattacharjea, the deputy editor-in-chief who had been actually running the paper for more than the last two months while the editor-in-chief S. M. Mulgaonkar was away in Kerala for an asthma cure? And what would happen to star columnist and newshound Kuldip Nayar, editor of the Express News Service and the country's most famous reporter who has often been called, by his admirers, the Jack Anderson of India?

The answers to these two questions came promptly and tersely: both of them decided to resign rather than work under Nihal Singh, who had been junior to both of them long ago in *The Statesman*. Bhattacharjea had been a special correspondent in the early Sixties when Nihal Singh was still a city reporter. And Kuldip Nayar's position was more ironic: he had once been editor of Nihal Singh in *The Statesman*.

What was most intriguing and disturbing about the appointment was its sheer suddenness. Both Bhattacharjea and Nayar were shocked when they were told about Nihal Singh's appointment by Mulgaonkar on 11 March. Nayar, who has a reputation for ferreting out exclusive information, pinpointed the secrecy involved when he told *Sunday* that he had "no indication" at all that he and Bhattacharjea would be upstaged so unceremoniously. Nihal Singh's appointment was a not very indirect communication to both Bhattacharjea and Nayar that R. N. Goenka, the chairman of The Indian Express company, wanted them to quit. It was like a slap in the face from the proprietor, and neither editor could understand why it had happened. Bhattacharjea had been given the impression, particularly during the last few months that he would be succeeding Mulgaonkar, who had long wanted to retire due to bad health. Moreover, in recent weeks Bhattacharjea's introduction of a special feature page on Saturday had boosted the *Express* circulation on that day by some two thousand copies. Bhattacharjea said, "I have been trying particularly hard to improve the paper and it has been working out," but he felt that his efforts had gone unnoticed by the proprietor: "He may not have noticed it. When he is in a bad mood he does not notice things."

The newspaper tycoon was more than forcing the hands of these two seniormost journalists working for him; he surely knew they would resign rather than work under Nihal Singh. Which makes it all the more surprising; in the past Goenka has gone out of his way to treat them with utmost warmth. This was particularly evident when he stood by them during Emergency, when both of them, because of their close connections with the JP movement and general sympathy with the opposition, were in the bad books of the government. Kuldip Nayar even went to jail for a brief while, but as soon as he was out he returned to his desk in the *Express* and resumed his role in running the paper. As for Bhattacharjea, the government dropped numerous hints that he be sent out of Delhi; a suggestion was even made that he be relegated to foreign correspondent and sent to Sikkim. Goenka simply ignored all this.

Goenka has shown guts in his willingness to hire journalists out of favour with the ruling establishment. Last year, he took on Hiranmoy Karlekar, shown the door by K. K. Birla after Mrs Gandhi took over (of course an impression is going around that Karlekar came into the Goenka stable less because of his opposition to Mrs Gandhi—if indeed there is any of that—and more because of his closeness to leaders of the BJP). And despite the crudest rumours that executive editor Arun Shourie's days were numbered because of his crusade against the government, he is quite secure—if anything his position has been strengthened.

The recent bloodbath at *The Indian Express* is, however, typical in the history of the institution and its creator. Perhaps no other newspaper proprietor in the country has such an enigmatic love-hate relationship with editors as Ram Nath Goenka. The erstwhile Congress volunteer who got interested in journalism around 1929 because Mahatma Gandhi "wanted me to take interest in the paper (that is, the Congress organ *Swarajya* at Madras)."

According to Goenka, "I was with the Mahatma in 1977 when he came to Champaran. Then in Calcutta, when I was in college, I got into contact with Subhas Babu (Bose) in the beginning of 1922, since I was associating with people whom my guardians did not like, a conspiracy was hatched to send me out of Calcutta to Madras, which was like Andaman Islands for the north Indians, and particularly for the Marwaris, at that time. I was supposed to be sent there for a few months. I went there, I met Rajaji. Rajaji wanted me to take over the activities of the Hindi Prachar Sabha; I got involved in politics."

It is, of course, the tragedy of his editors that they have never been able to fathom Goenka's "politics" within the Express organisation itself. In the last two years, at least five other editors have come and gone at various positions in the organisation, apart from the three retiring with Nihal Singh's appointment as editor-in-chief from 23 March. Earlier, in February Prem Shankar Jha resigned from the editorship of *The Financial Express*,—less than a year after he began a flamboyant "let's-improve-the-paper" phase, in which even office cabins were changed. Jha's predecessor at *The Financial Express*, Kevin Rafferty, formerly a senior correspondent of London's *Financial Times*, had an equally brief, whimsical and incomprehensible stay. In February, Darryl

D'Monte, resident editor at Bombay, was also under fire and for some time it appeared that he might be forced to follow Dom Moraes, sacked earlier from a very lucrative position as editor in charge of the Sunday magazine section. The other two editors to come and go during the last two years were N. J. Nanporia, the former editor of *The Times of India* and *The Statesman* and media whiz-kid R. V. Pandit, who was said to have promised Goenka in 1977 that he would make the Bombay edition of the *Express* sell more than *The Times of India*.

Apart from the hiring and firing of editors, the *Express* management is also constantly shuffling and reshuffling them. Bikram Vohra, who resigned in March from—the resident editorship of the Ahmedabad edition, had originally been appointed to edit the Sunday magazine section. V. K. Narayanan has recently been transferred from Bangalore to Hyderabad as the resident editor there, and Saeed Naqvi has gone through many depressing phases before emerging suddenly as an editor at Madras, supervising the Madras and some other editions of the *Indian Express* in south India.

The immediate impact of Goenka's manipulations at the editorial level is

S. NIHAL SINGH

"Frankly, I don't know Mr Goenka well"

***Q**: How exactly did the offer from the* **Indian Express** *materialise? We had heard that you might join as editor of the* **Illustrated Weekly.**

A: Well, actually there were negotiations going on with the *Weekly*, and the offer was there. Then I got this offer from the *Express*, which I accepted because I think it is a more challenging job in a way, and more in line with what I have been doing in the past. I think the *Express* is a lively paper.

Q: But don't you think editing a magazine would have been really more challenging?

A: In a way, yes. .Yes, actually. I think one of the bright aspects of Indian journalism today is how the magazines have come up—good, bad or indifferent, but there is a new thrust in journalism, a breath of fresh air, in terms of investigative reporting, in terms of various other things But I think the *Express*, amongst all the major newspapers, is somehow different. It's livelier, and I thought there was scope for daily newspapers also trying to catch up with modern trends.

Q: What would be the things you would like to achieve at the Express *in the near future?*

A: It would be unfair for me to talk about my plans for the *Express* before I've had a chance to be there and studied the problems involved, and got to know my new colleagues. Before doing that, I think it would be unfair of me to make any grand plans. Obviously my effort will be to make the paper better. It's a good paper already, but obviously the effort of every new editor is to try and improve the paper.

Q: Talking generally, what in your opinion can be done to improve a daily newspaper?

A: One aspect of any newspaper which tends to be forgotten is the news. So in terms of future efforts, I think one of my efforts would be strengthen the news side

Q: The Express, *despite being such a lively paper, is not number one in any metropolis Despite its stress on investigative reporting, it is not able to chip away the circulation of more conservative papers.*

A: Well, I would like the *Express* to be number one in the country, rather than in one place. Moreover, you know that newspaper reading is a habit. People are used to a certain style in writing, they are used to where a particular news item will be...it is like being married to somebody. Divorce is difficult unless the provocation is very great. To break a long established newspaper reading habit is a difficult thing. It can still be done but there are problems.

Q: When you resigned from The Statesman, *you had an altercation with Mr Irani. At the same time, Mr R. N. Goenka is not known to be an easy proprietor to get along with.*

A: Frankly, I don't know Mr Goenka well. I have never worked with him before I have admired several things in him, in terms of his record during the Emergency. I think he put up a very good fight He did it with conviction. The point is, I don't want to pre judge the issue before going there. I don't see any problems coming up Obviously, he wants the *Express* to be even better than it is today, and that is my task. So we will be working on the same wavelength, in that sense We have not had formal discussions. I was made this offer, I weighed it and I thought it was a challenging offer to take up.

Q: Do you think that you will be able to get along better with Mr Goenka than with Mr Irani?

A There was no question of an altercation with Mr Irani There came a point when I felt that I was not getting my due in terms of what my job was. I am not talking of financial terms, I am talking in terms of my responsibilites as editor which were interfered with—and I'm talking about the administrative side. I had no differences on policy questions with Mr Irani; I just thought he was undermining my authority as editor.

Q: There is a rumour that you have recently changed your attitude to Mrs Gandhi's government and are no longer critical of it.

A: No, I have not heard this rumour. I haven't changed.

Q: What do you think of the present ruling party?

A Well, obviously for various reasons the present leadership has not measured up to the tasks of the country. What the alternatives are, if any,*at this point of time, is another matter. Whatever her other faults were, it appeared that when Mrs Gandhi returned to power in January last year she would get things moving As everybody knows, there has been quite a measure of disillusionment Of course she has been giving various explanations, all of which to me are not entirely convincing.

Q: It is also said that you attended a gathering at Mr Patwant Singh's house at New Delhi at which Mrs Gandhi met several journalists and intellectuals.

A I was at Patwant's house. It was more a social get together than anything else, because nothing of substance came out of it. We discussed various things in a very desultory fashion—government buildings not being maintained well, problems involved in family planning, the question of having experts in the government and what the problems are—that kind of a thing.

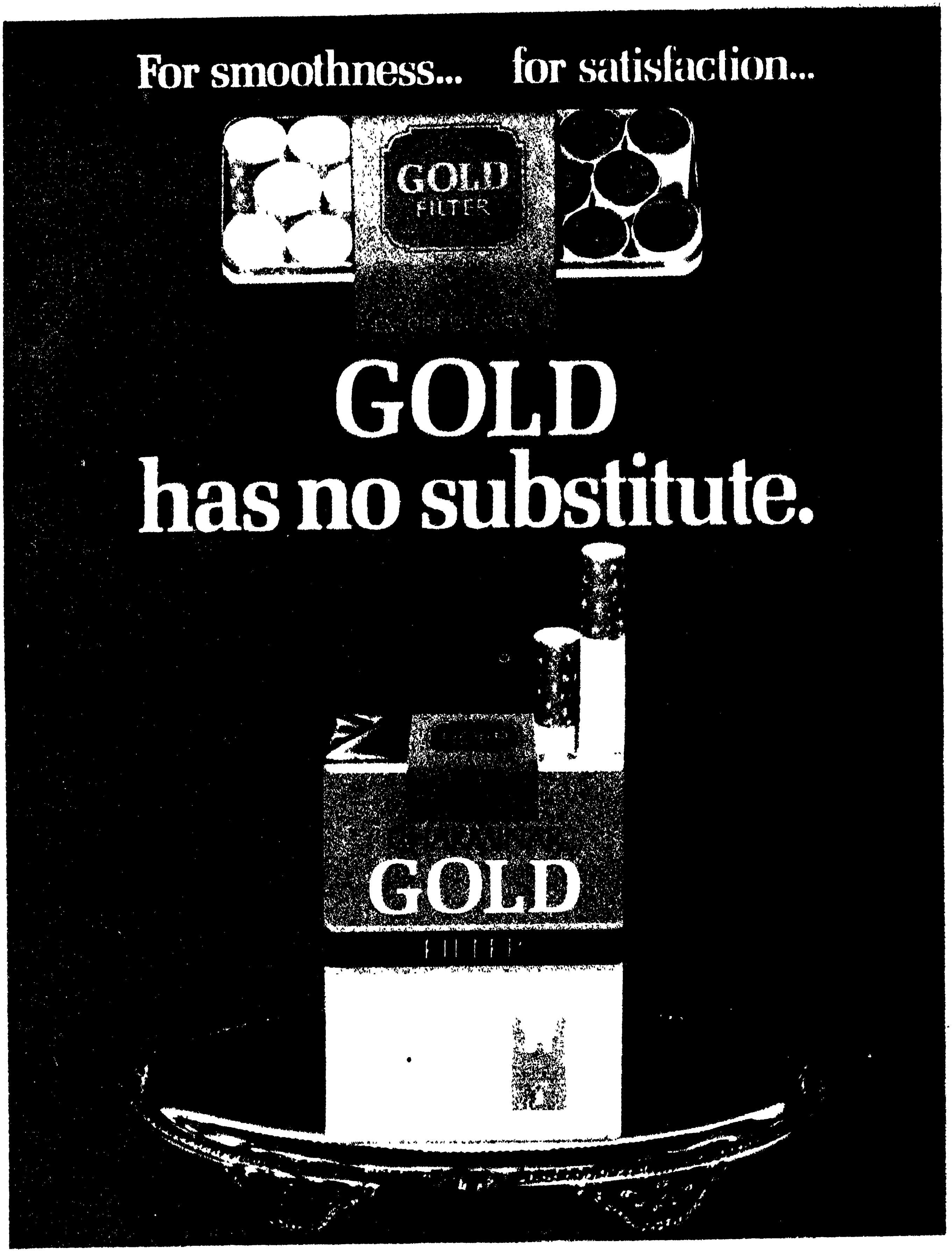
Q: Was the media also discussed?

A: No

Q How long a period has been mentioned in your contract?

A There is no specific, fixed term In any case, I take a very different, pragmatic attitude to these problems I don't think any clauses (about an editor's term in the contract) amount to very much. It is a question of one's ability to work as one wants to, and that's the most important thing

S Nihal Singh



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that his editors have become insecure, and they often extend this insecurity to the lower levels, confusing correspondents and reporters particularly—not to mention news editors and the other senior editorial staff. Till the recent reshuffle at the top, for instance, the Delhi office had as many as five editors—Mulgaonkar as editor-in-chief, Bhattacharjea as deputy editor-in-chief, Kuldip Nayar as editor of the Express News Service, Arun Shourie as executive editor, and Hiranmoy Karlekar as night editor over the news editor. Consequently, the functioning of the five editors often overlapped, and on many occasions specific authority was never clearly defined.

A similar state of affairs has also continued over the years on the managerial side of the organisation. The *Express* management scarcely gives the impression of being a modern, professionally organised set-up. For instance, the general manager of the Delhi branch has been a non-functioning head for nearly three years now. The day to day administration is practically in the hands of another executive. At Bombay, the general manager is reported to have resigned and is said to be leaving in April. This would be the second time that this particular general manager would be leaving the organisation, having left it earlier in 1975 before rejoining in 1977.

Another impact of these policies at the senior editorial and management levels is that the *Express* journalists are constantly grumbling about having to work with almost no facilities at all, against competitors who provide their reporters and correspondents with much more support.

If the *Express* still manages to stay in the front on the metropolitan and the national level, it is due to certain features in the *Express* tradition. Firstly, it is one of the few big newspaper organisations in the country where job-satisfaction is possible. The environment inside the paper's office stimulates journalists to do their best, particularly on investigative and exclusive news stories. On the editorial side, seniors are only too willing to encourage young journalists who work hard. The office environment also encourages a considerable amount of communication between the editors and the staff journalists. Often this dialogue is at a friendly, informal level.

Goenka has also demonstrated, as the wife of a middle-rank staffer at Delhi put it, to attract journalists who are willing to overwork year after year for bad salaries. This has been due to a careful recruitment in the past of idealistic, sincere and honest people for the newspaper's middle-ranks. Apart from working hard themselves, these people have also inspired or persuaded others to work far beyond the line of duty. As Ajit Bhattacharjea told *Sunday*, Goenka's methods have been successful in the past but there could be trouble ahead: "He has done very well. This is the biggest chain of English-language newspapers. It may have worked in an earlier period when you could take people for granted, but it can't work any longer. Journalists also cannot be taken for granted."

It is this highly personal hurt that Bhattacharjea and Nayar felt that led Kuldip Nayar to ask, in the course of his interview with *Sunday*, why the management talked so much about needing a young editor-in-chief to succeed Mulgaonkar; after all, he said, Mulgaonkar was over seventy years old and it was not the management that wanted him to retire, it was Mulgaonkar who wanted to leave because of bad health.

Mulgaonkar's connection with *The Indian Express* does not exactly come to an end from 23 March. It is said that the *Express* wants Mulgaonkar to retain an advisorial relationship with the paper. This, naturally, leads to another kind of explanation for the exit of Bhattacharjea and Nayar, over and above the fact that they were both nearing their retirement age (which is 58 for working journalists but not for editors, who have another two years before retirement). It is said that Goenka had wanted Kuldip Nayar to edit the Chandigarh edition in 1977 and build it up as a serious rival to *The Tribune* in Punjab, where Nayar enjoys a considerable reputation and is quite a celebrity. Nayar, however, did not want to leave Delhi and offered to help build the Chandigarh edition from Delhi itself. This is said to be the beginning of Goenka's displeasure with Nayar. Bhattacharjea's case is less explicable, and the only plausible explanation as to why he was not chosen as the new editor-in-chief is in the opinion that Mulgaonkar never got along with Ajit Bhattacharjea.

Once news about Nihal Singh was conveyed to Kuldip Nayar and Ajit Bhattacharjea, both of them told Mulgaonkar they would quit. Bhattacharjea, who was to retire next year, went on three months' leave on 19 March, after giving the necessary three months notice of his resignation. Kuldip Nayar, who was to retire in August this year, told *Sunday* on 16 March that he would be going on three months' leave, too, and hand in his resignation as soon as his lawyers had drafted it.

The parting has been more bitter than is visible on the surface. Ajit Bhattacharjea's last column for *The Indian Express* is said to have been rejected by Mulgaonkar. And Kuldip Nayar's comment, in the last piece he gave on 17 March for his column *Between The Lines*, that this would be his last column in *The Indian Express*, is said to have been edited by Goenka himself before the piece was sent to the printing press.

ARUN SHOURIE

Racehorse on a *tonga*

Q: Mr Nihal Singh is not known to be pro-Mrs Gandhi's government. How do you see this in the context of most proprietors wanting to have editors who are in the good books of the government today?

A: I don't know Mr Nihal Singh, but if what you say is correct then obviously the *Indian Express* plans to continue to be an independent and impartial paper.

Q: Have you met Nihal Singh?

A: I remember meeting him many years ago at a dinner in Washington, at the house of *The Hindu's* correspondent there. Mr Ramnath Goenka called me to meet him after Mr Nihal Singh accepted the appointment. The three of us were together for five or ten minutes.

Q: What do you feel about Mr Kuldip Nayar's and Mr Bhattacharjea's resignations?

A: Their leaving will certainly be a great loss to the paper. Both are associated with the tradition of independent journalism in India, in Kuldip's case with the added ability to ferret out news from the interstices of government.

Q: Are you thinking of leaving?

A: No. On all accounts, Mr Nihal Singh is a person who will continue the independent line of the paper. On all accounts, he is a gentleman. But, as I said, I do not know him at all, so all I can say is what Kamaraj used to say: "*Parakalam* (we shall see)."

Q: It is said that but for the fear that the present government would not like it, you would have been chief editor?

A: No, not at all. After all, you have yourself implied that Mr Nihal Singh is not exactly a favourite of this government. So I don't think that the possible reaction of the government could have been a decisive factor in the selection of the new editor. Secondly, Mr Goenka has a much better assessment of my suitability for such things than friends like you have. Ever since we got to know each other, Ram Nathji has been telling me, "You are a racehorse. My *Express* is a *tonga*. I must make a *tonga*-horse out of you, otherwise you'll wreck my *Express*." There's a typical Ram Nath Goenka statement for you, one to which you can't object. After all, who can object to being reined in on the grounds that he is a racehorse who happens to be yoked for the moment to a *tonga*? But it isn't just a shrewd way of putting things, it is shrewd assessment too, isn't it?

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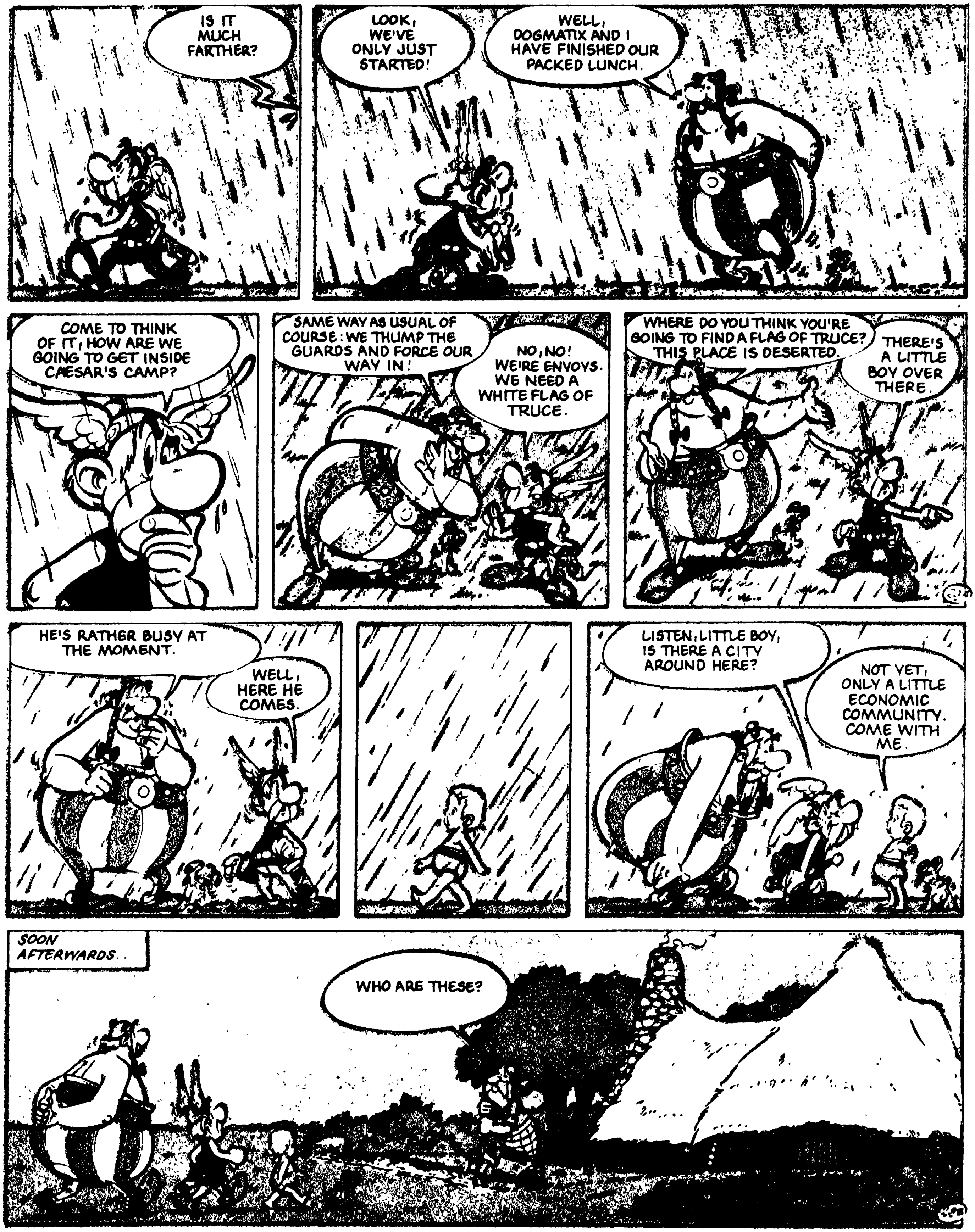
BELGIUM

by GOSCINNY
and UDERZO


IS IT MUCH FARTHER?
LOOK, WE'VE ONLY JUST STARTED!
WELL, DOGMATIX AND I HAVE FINISHED OUR PACKED LUNCH.
COME TO THINK OF IT, HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET INSIDE CAESAR'S CAMP?
SAME WAY AS USUAL OF COURSE: WE THUMP THE GUARDS AND FORCE OUR WAY IN!
NO, NO! WE'RE ENVOYS. WE NEED A WHITE FLAG OF TRUCE.
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO FIND A FLAG OF TRUCE? THIS PLACE IS DESERTED.
THERE'S A LITTLE BOY OVER THERE.
HE'S RATHER BUSY AT THE MOMENT.
WELL, HERE HE COMES.
LISTEN, LITTLE BOY, IS THERE A CITY AROUND HERE?
NOT YET, ONLY A LITTLE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. COME WITH ME.
SOON AFTERWARDS..
WHO ARE THESE?

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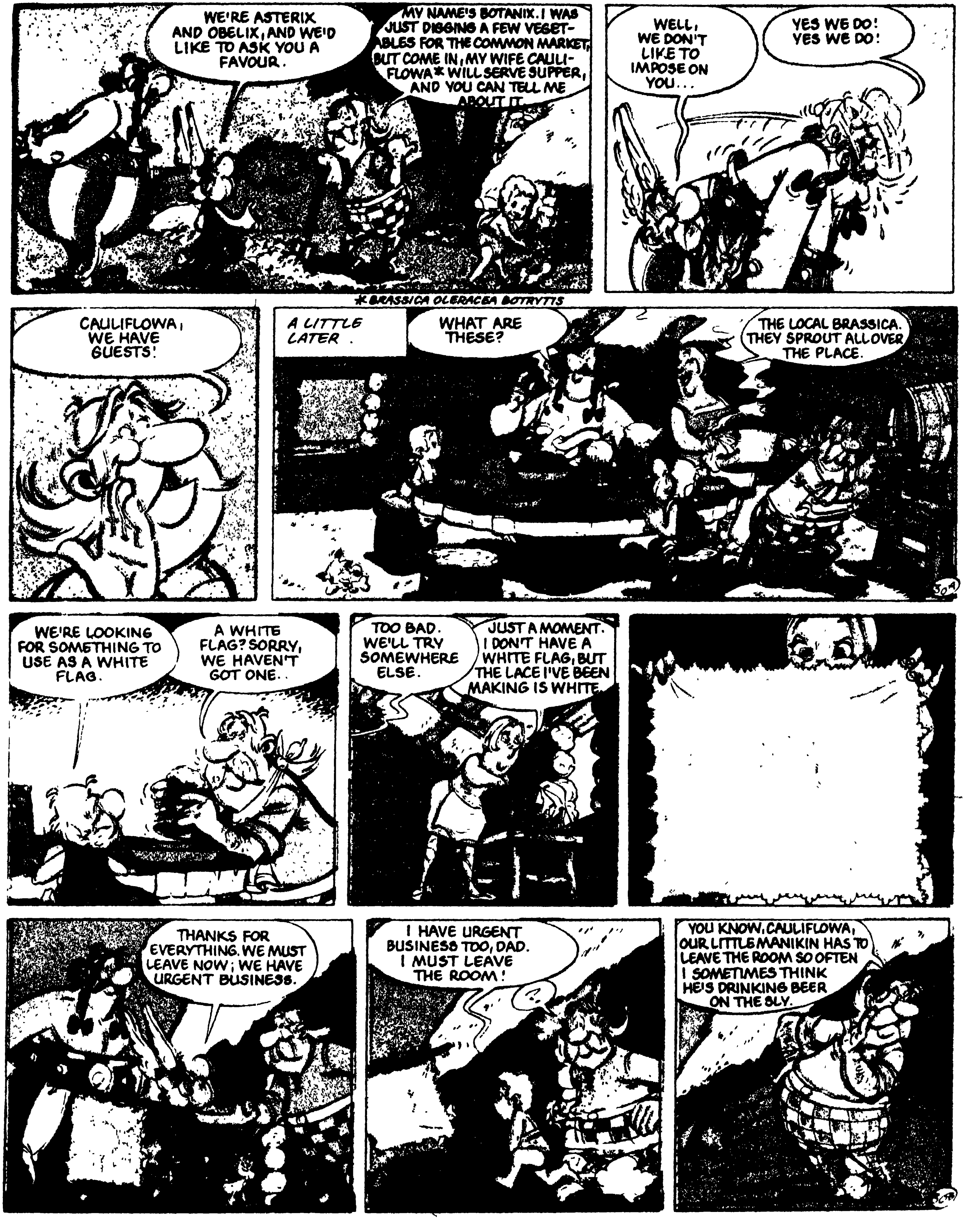

WE'RE ASTERIX AND OBELIX, AND WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FAVOUR.
MY NAME'S BOTANIX. I WAS JUST DIGGING A FEW VEGETABLES FOR THE COMMON MARKET, BUT COME IN, MY WIFE CAULIFLOWA* WILL SERVE SUPPER, AND YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT IT.
WELL, WE DON'T LIKE TO IMPOSE ON YOU...
YES WE DO! YES WE DO!
* BRASSICA OLERACEA BOTRYTIS
CAULIFLOWA, WE HAVE GUESTS!
A LITTLE LATER.
WHAT ARE THESE?
THE LOCAL BRASSICA. THEY SPROUT ALL OVER THE PLACE.
WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO USE AS A WHITE FLAG.
A WHITE FLAG? SORRY, WE HAVEN'T GOT ONE..
TOO BAD. WE'LL TRY SOMEWHERE ELSE.
JUST A MOMENT. I DON'T HAVE A WHITE FLAG, BUT THE LACE I'VE BEEN MAKING IS WHITE.
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING. WE MUST LEAVE NOW; WE HAVE URGENT BUSINESS.
I HAVE URGENT BUSINESS TOO, DAD. I MUST LEAVE THE ROOM!
?
YOU KNOW, CAULIFLOWA, OUR LITTLE MANIKIN HAS TO LEAVE THE ROOM SO OFTEN I SOMETIMES THINK HE'S DRINKING BEER ON THE SLY.

"Kuldip is my friend... but Nihal Singh is younger"

Ram Nath Goenka, the owner of the Indian Express group, spoke to Anil Saari *about the changes in the Express group—the resignations and the appointment of S. Nihal Singh as the editor-in-chief of the* Indian Express.

Q: Why did you select Mr Nihal Singh to be the new editor-in-chief of the Indian Express, *a decision that lead to the resignation of Mr Kuldip Nayar and Mr Ajit Bhattacharjea?*

A: Nihal Singh is a younger man. Mr Ajit Bhattacharjea was to retire within one year, and we thought that for a job like this we should have a younger man. We are a totally different kind of newspaper group. The *Indian Express* is being produced from ten different centres. The editor-in-chief is in charge of all the ten editions, of the staff, news coverage, correspondents and the like. We have more than a thousand journalists. We want a younger man because we have found that older people have not been able to do full justice to the demands which our newspaper imposes upon him.

Q: What do you and Mr Nihal Singh hope to achieve together?

A: He is fifty-two: a young man. He was the editor of *The Statesman;* he's well known as a journalist—that is all the qualification we need. We don't want any more qualifications than he possesses, and in any case we have a rule that the retiring editor suggests his successor: and it was Mr Mulgaonkar who selected Mr Nihal Singh. When Mr Frank Moraes retired, he selected Mr Mulgaonkar. So the retiring editor has the largest say in the appointment of his successor. I am not suggesting that I have no say in the matter, no: I have a say; but unless I have got very strong reasons to differ with the editor, I always agree with the editor in the appointment of his successor.

Q: Were there other names considered for the editor-in-chief?

A: Yes, some names were suggested, but Mr Mulgaonkar selected Mr Nihal Singh.

Q: One of the things that Mr Kuldip Nayar and Mr Bhattacharjea implied was...

A: Kuldip Nayar's case is totally different, because Nihal Singh was his junior and he doesn't feel that he should continue now as a junior of Nihal Singh. Apart from that, he was to retire in August this year. So he is retiring in July this year, that's all. There is no difference between the two situations.

Q: There was an impression in the Delhi office of the Express that Mr Ajit Bhattacharjea might succeed Mr Mulgaonkar.

A: There was, there was...that was considered. When we considered other people, Ajit Bhattacharjea was definitely considered. Ajit Bhattacharjea is a fine man, he is a good journalist, no question about it, but we found that a younger man would be a better person to take care of the ten editions than a person who is on the retiring list.

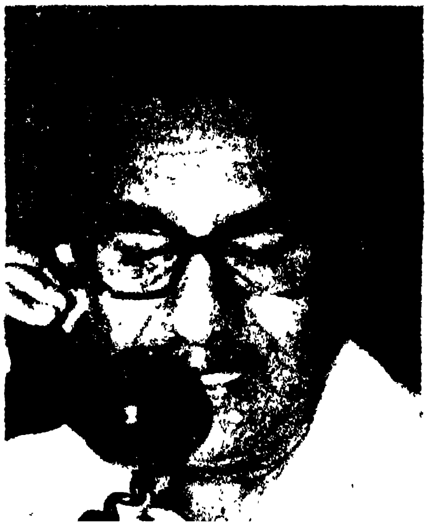
Q: So much care seems to be going into selecting the editor-in-chief, but some editions do not even have a resident editor.

A: Your question actually answers your earlier questions: some of the editions do not have resident editors, and the responsibility of the editor-in-chief becomes larger and greater, and therefore you want a person who can devote a lot of time, energy and who will have the energy to stay. After all, I am 77, I can't function. I work for an hour or two, and then I get tired. After all, vitality goes...(coughs). I have absolutely nothing against Ajit Bhattacharjea or Kuldip—Kuldip is my friend. Even yesterday, we parted as great friends. I can appreciate his position. He didn't reject my appointment of Nihal Singh, he's not opposed to it, but his personal position was that he could not continue.

Q: How do you implement your policy in the paper?

A: I don't interfere with the editor. My policy is set once in five years or once in ten years. Supposing the editor comes to me and says, 'Well, if we take this risk it may cost you a fortune. Do you want us to take this risk or not? We would not like to do something which will hurt you irreparably.' Then I could tell him, alright, go ahead, I don't mind the risk; or that I mind the risk, please go slow. But that happens once in ten years, once in five years.

Kuldip Nayar



Q: Sometimes one gets the impression that at the Express editors are appointed and dismissed suddenly.

A: Whom have we appointed and whom have we dismissed—can you give me a single instance?

A: At the Financial Express, *Mr Prem Shankar Jha...*

A: So far as Mr Prem Shankar Jha is concerned, he understands me, I understand him. He thinks that he is more a writer than an administrator. The editor's job is more of an administrator's than a writer's.

He is a thorough gentleman, a very knowledgeable person, and I have great respect for him, but he told me that he would like to take a writing job, and I think he is going to the *Times of India* as a writer, not an editor but a writer. Some people are good administrators, some people are good writers, and some people, according to me, like Mulgaonkar, are both. But it is very rare to find people who are both good administrators and writers.

Q: What actually happened when Mr V. K. Narsimhan resigned from the organisation in 1977? (Mr Narsimhan had resigned as editor of the Financial Express *and editor-in-chief of* The Indian Express.*)*

A: That is very simple, that is as simple as daylight. What happened was this. When I was dying in Calcutta of a heart attack, I was unconscious for thirty days and everybody thought that I would go. It was in 1976, during the Emergency. Then the government of India tried to force my son to dismiss Mr Mulgaonkar and appoint somebody who was a reporter in *The Times of India*—I don't know his name—as editor. My son remonstrated. He said his father was dying, let us take the decision after either he dies or he regains health, not before that. But they forced him; finding his father on the deathbed, he submitted. When Mulgaonkar heard about it, he sent in his resignation. He said he would not like to embarrass my son, particularly when I was not there. He resigned and went away. I did not know about it for another two months; my people didn't want to give me the information when I wasn't well.When I heard it, I was very upset but what could I do? I saw to it that Mulgaonkar was properly treated, properly looked after, during the time he wasn't the editor. And we appointed Narsimhan as a temporary measure; in writing, (he was told) that it was a temporary job (in *The Indian Express)* and that during the period he would get some extra remuneration. The moment the Emergency was over, I told Narsimhan that I was getting back Mulgaonkar and thanked him for the way in which he had behaved for eight or nine months of Emergency. He said now he was the acting editor-in-chief, and he took all the risk, so he should continue as the editor-in-chief. I said that was not possible. Anybody who had been a victim of Emergency must be restored to his old position. He said he would not be able to work under Mulgaonkar, having once become the editor-in-chief. I said, according to our agreement, in writing, he was only a temporary person. He said, yes, but now he felt that it was beneath his dignity to work under anybody. I can't help it, I said thank you and we parted as friends. What else would you expect me to do?

Q: What is the tradition in The Indian Express *that has created this image that it has today?*

A: We were born at a time when we were fighting for Independence. We started the paper in 1932. Then, in South India, there was no Congress paper. There were two papers in Madras, one was *The Hindu* which, according to them, was an independent paper, and then there was an English-owned paper, *The Madras Mail,* which was wholly European-owned, and you can understand that anything national was irrational for them. We were born at that time to fill up the vacuum which was created by the demise of *Swarajya* which was run by Prakasam Rajagopalachari. *Swarajya* died in 1931. So we took over, it was a paper which was there to back up the Congress in all its activities. In 1934 the authorities demanded some security from us, sometimes they prosecuted us, and all that process went on, from 1932 itself till the war. When war broke out, naturally we were against India being involved. The condition of Mahatma Gandhi was that we were prepared to be involved in the war, if the war was an Indian war, not an imperialistic war. Finally, in 1942, Mahatma Gandhi and all the rest of them were arrested on the eve of the meeting of the AICC on 9 August and Mahatma Gandhi the next day said that he would like every nationalist newspaper to close down and restart only when there was some freedom promised to us. We were the first to close down. Then there was a split in the newspaper world. There was an All India Newspaper Editors Conference, born in 1940, and there was a nationalist Newspaper Editors Conference, born in 1942. I was president of the nationalist Newspaper Editors Conference and Mr Srinivasan of the *The Hindu* was the president of the All India Newspaper Editors Conference.

Q: Today, the Express *is hardly pro-Congress; it is almost anti-Congress.*

A: Why do you say anti-Congress? We are independent, we are not anti-Congress, we are not for anything, we take each issue on its merits, whether it is for the Congress or against the Congress. And then there are quite a number of Congresses now. There is not one Congress: three which I know, there may be many more, there may be some more which, I don't know. So, which Congress are we to support, and which Congress are we to oppose? There is no Congress now left, as a national organisation, as an organisation which represents the nation. The Janata Party, the BJP, all the parties in the country are supposed to represent the people of the country. It is inevitable that we take a line neither for nor against anybody, but in the interest of the country and of the people, and that's what we do.

Q: Though the Express *is the largest chain in the country it is not the number one paper in any one part of the country.*

A: There is a paper called *The Statesman* in Calcutta; it is more than a century old, it has a tradition and therefore it gets most of the classified advertisements. Likewise, you have *The Hindu* in the south, you have *The Hindustan Times* in Delhi, *The Times of India* at Bombay. Now all these papers are the oldest established papers in each of their regions, and they get the classified advertisements. And whether you like it or not, classified advertisements are news items wrapped in currency notes. They create readership, and they will go to the largest circulated paper. So unless you have the classified advertisements, you can't become the largest circulated paper, and unless you are the largest circulated paper you don't get the classified advertisements. They have got a lead over me of more than fifty years. Besides that, if you go to Madras, the man will say, 'My grandfather read *The Hindu,* my father read *The Hindu,* I will also read *The Hindu.*' Likewise in Calcutta for *The Statesman* and to some extent the *Amrita Bazar Patrika.* The same thing goes for *The Times of India* (at Bombay) and *The Hindustan Times* at Delhi. It is an inhuman job, a very, very difficult job to get the better of them. Of course, sometimes we do, on account of our independent policy. In Emergency we had the largest circulation in Delhi, because we were the only people—according to readers, not according to me—who were giving the latest political news, without fear or favour. Our circulation reached two lakhs and eighty thousands copies.

Q: But the Express *was not able to hold on to that circulation.*

A: No, because things changed. Everybody became a Janata Party paper. When the Janata Party came into power, everybody followed the Janata Party; *The Indian Express* was not the only such paper. There was no paper which did not toe the line of the Janata Party (and its in-fighting also) just as we did. So there was no difference between us and our competitors. Today also, sometimes they get the better of us in certain news items; sometimes we get the better of them. But because of our independence our circulation is quite appreciable. It is not that we are far behind our competitors; the only difference is that they get more advertisements, more classified advertisements, therefore giving more pages and therefore getting more circulation than us.

Q: What are your plans for the future of the Express *as an institution?*

A: Future of what? My institution? You see, that is a much bigger question. As long as I am alive, I am there. After me, I have practically nobody in the family. My son is no more. My daughter-in-law is the only person in the family. What we shall do in the future I am not able to tell you. Even if I knew it, I would not tell you.

Q: There was a rumour some time back that you were thinking of establishing a trust to run the Express organisation.

A: This is a subject which I won't like to discuss, because some things have to be done. What will be in the best interests of the paper shall be done. We would like to keep the paper going because I have invested out of my sweat and blood and I won't like it to die. We are thinking of ways and means to keep the flag flying, its light burning. How do we do it is a matter which I can't discuss because I don't know myself.

Q: What is your 'relationship', if one can call it that, with the present government?

A: Plus-minus zero! They are independent, we are independent. I am not against the government: when they do certain things which are good, we applaud them. When we think that they have done something wrong we criticise them, and that is the duty of any independent newspaper.

Q: The Express *has always had a very bright, very hard working staff. Would you like to comment on the fact that many members of the staff feel that they are underpaid?*

A: We were the first to accept the Palekar award. The Palekar award puts us almost in the highest category. No, I cannot help people thinking that they are underpaid but compared to anybody, I say, and I challenge, that merit-wise no staff of mine is underpaid and I am very happy with my staff. My staff likes me, I like them. Do you know when I was sick in Calcutta—I was dying—my staff collected money in South India and performed *archana* in all the temples in South India, at their cost. That is the spirit of my staff. There may be some disgruntled people. You mean to say there are no disgruntled people in the world? The best of people may be disgruntled, because everybody thinks that he deserves more than what he gets. If people think they are ill-paid, I can't help it. The fact is that we are working in the red. We are losing money because of rising expenses, rising cost of newsprint. I get a rental income of one crore rupees or more, that goes into the paper and still we don't get profits. But I am not worried about it because I don't want money. What do I want money for? Do you know that for the last twenty years we have not given one farthing as dividend to the shareholders? But I believe that whatever we make—if we lose, we lose—whatever we make must be ploughed back to build an organisation. That's what we do, and that's what we have been doing all the time. But for that, we would not be what we are today. ■

Minorities commission: twice orphaned?

The Janata government ignored it. This one didn't like Justice Ansari

M. H. Beg administering oath of office to President

New Delhi: The powers that rule Delhi have always claimed concern for the minorities: lauded them on public media, shed tears for them during elections, wept copiously after every communal riot. Central and state governments have vied with each other to appoint committees, panels and commissions.

It was with some such pious concern that the Janata government adopted a resolution to set up the Minorities commission on 12 January 1978. The government then felt the need for "effective institutional arrangements for the effective enforcement and implementation of all the safeguards provided for the minorities in the Constitution, in central and state laws, in government policies..." etc. Eight functions were listed, ranging from preparation of reports to evaluation of safeguards to suggestion of legal and welfare measures The resolution promised all governmental cooperation, assuring the commission of an official explanation for each rejected recommendation. (It did not, however, say then that every other recommendation would fall in this category.) The portents were good The minorities, ever gullible, welcomed the move. Mr M. R. Masani was appointed chairman of the commission with Justice M. R. A. Ansari and Professor V. V. John as members.

On 31 May 1978, Mr Masani resigned. More than a year later, Prof. John and another member Dr Aloo J. Dastur handed in their resignations. On 23 February 1981, Justice Ansari, who had been appointed chairman was sacked. He was curtly informed that his term had expired although he had five more months to go.

Meanwhile reports, on the Aligarh Muslim University Bill, the Aligarh riots, the Jamshedpur riots, the Freedom of Religion Bill, on a dispute concerning a Sikh *gurdwara* at Karnal, had been presented to the central and state governments along with comprehensive recommendations. The governments did not even acknowledge the reports. The centre, apart from an occasional polite letter to the chairman, virtually ignored the commission's existence.

The members soon realised that the assurance of 'full cooperation,' was merely lip service. And there was nothing the commission could do about it. Its recommendations were not binding on the governments as it had not been given a statutory status. The commission's powers were limited to a purely advisory body and the advice it gave usually fell on deaf ears. Mr Masani became aware of the commission's impotence within a few months of its inception and resigned. John and Dastur took longer, and Justice Ansari stuck on till the bitter end, protesting for a statutory status all along, until the home ministry decided that it had tolerated him long enough.

Justice Ansari had been appointed chairman of the commission when it was reconstituted by the President of India on 28 July 1978, two months after Masani's resignation. At that time its strength was further expanded to include three more members: Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, Dr Aloo J. Dastur and Ven. Kushak G. Bakhula.

Today, the commission's officials claim that Justice Ansari's term expired on 23 February as was stated in the letter from the home ministry and that the commission had never been re-constituted. They are, perhaps, unaware of the contents of para five of the first annual report for the year ending 31 December 1978.

With the resignation, the government has finally been able to create a post for the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Mirza Hameedulla Beg. Mr Beg took over as chairman on 4 March. Two more members are expected to be appointed shortly to finally fill in the vacancies left by John and Dastur.

The commission, when constituted in 1978, was sanctioned neither staff, nor a budget nor even office accommodation by the government. Its meetings were sometimes held at the India International Centre in Delhi, sometimes at Mr Masani's residence in Bombay and occasionally at the home ministry. Eventually, two buildings were allotted on a temporary basis at Willingdon Crescent in New Delhi. Finally, it was given a place it could call its own, in the Lok Nayak Bhawan at Khan Market, Delhi. Obviously if this was the situation vis-a-vis a central office, the commission did not get any regional offices.

The Congress(I) manifesto for the 1980 elections promised a statutory status for the commission, promising the minorities that it would do what the Janata government had failed to. But instead, shortly after coming to power, it appointed a "high-powered" panel under Dr Gopal Singh to consider fiscal policies relating to the minorities. That this function is contained in the commission's official terms of reference was disregarded. Perhaps, the real fault of the commission, in the eyes of the present government, was that it was a Janata 'enterprise.' Which was tragic, since the Janata had treated the commission as an orphan too.

The Janata government, however, in the face of immense pressure from minority lobbies did introduce the Constitution (46th Amendment) Bill in Parliament for according statutory status to the commission and abolishing the post of special officer, Linguistic Minorities (as his function came under the purview of the commission). The Bill, predictably, was dropped as it did not even secure a quorum in Parliament. This was another fraud perpetrated on minorities.

It is worthwhile to note what the annual reports say about the AMU Bill and other matters taken up by the commission. Regarding the AMU Bill, the commission points out that, shortly after taking the Bill under its consideration, it had requested the education minister not to introduce the Bill in Parliament until the commission "had an opportunity to express their considered views to the government." The education minister acknowledged the letter on 5 May 1978 but did not mention anything about the Bill. The next day members of the commission learnt from newspaper reports that the education minister had made a statement in the Lok Sabha announcing the government's decision to introduce the AMU Bill in the current session of Parliament. A similar announcement was made in the Rajya Sabha.

The Commission's investigation of the Aligarh communal riots in that year were also thwarted by the Uttar Pradesh government's refusal to allow them to meet the then district magistrate and the senior superintendent of police who had been transferred out of Aligarh. The report was thus prepared without the versions of the two important district officials.

In the first report the commission had recommended, amongst other things, withdrawal of the PAC from sensitive areas of the town, to be replaced by CRP and BSF contingents. It had also recommended recruitment of a larger percentage of Muslims in the PAC. The report was not considered then by the government. Only when riots took place in Moradabad were the issues re-opened.

Last November the home ministry approached the Minorities commission to organize a seminar on Muslims and their problems at Hyderabad in January 1981. The commission agreed. One lakh of rupees was sanctioned. Invitations were sent and accepted by persons from all over the country. Only the dates remained to be agreed upon. That depended on the convenience of the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, who would inaugurate the seminar. Early in January, Justice Ansari on returning to Delhi after finalising arrangements for the seminar in Hyderabad, received a letter from the home ministry saying that the seminar had been cancelled. No explanation was offered. Justice Ansari wrote to the home minister protesting against this decision. He did not receive a reply until 23 February when he was informed that his term had in the government's opinion expired with immediate effect. Justice Beg, he was told, was expected to replace him.

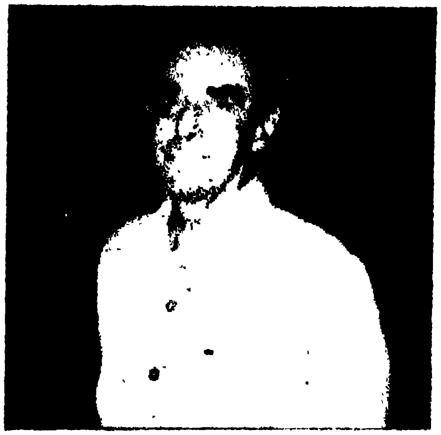
Justice Beg has taken over. He has made it clear that he is more interested in human rights than the specific problems of the minorities; that the need today is for a human rights commission and not a mere commission for minorities, and that every individual after all is a minority when considered as part of the entire human race. When asked if he felt that the government had done enough for human rights and the minorities since Independence he admitted, "Well frankly I have not studied the question of minorities in relation to human rights."

Shehnaz Syed

The ex-chairman of the Minorities commission, Justice M. R. A. Ansari, gave this exclusive interview after his removal.

Q: When the Minorities commission was first formed in 1978 did you or the other members feel that it would turn out to be such an ineffective body?

A: Certainly not. We all thought it would be a very effective body because it would be an independent body and it would function with the full cooperation of the centre and state governments.



M. R. Masani

Q: The fact that it came into existence by a resolution, did that undermine its status right from the beginning?

A: No. At that time we thought that because it had been created by the central government it would get the cooperation of all state governments and its recommendations would be binding on the governments concerned. We never felt at the beginning that a statutory status was necessary. But when we found that there was not all that much cooperation forthcoming from the state governments, we began demanding a statutory status.

Q: What were the difficulties you faced in getting the central and state governments to accept your recommendations?

A: The difficulties we faced were mainly delays in sending replies to our letters. Now you see our *modus operandi* was that whenever any representation was made either by an organisation, group or individual, we called for the comments of the state government concerned or the union government. Sometimes we did not get replies for months, so we had to send reminders, causing not only delays but also frustration. Ultimately we found that the comments sent to us were not very satisfactory. They were very cursory in nature and tried to support action already taken by the government. These were merely comments of junior officials, and we felt these questions were not being considered at the higher levels. And ultimately when we did make some recommendations they were not accepted by the state governments.

Q: What about infringement on the commission's jurisdiction by various committees like the Dr Gopal Singh panel?

A: No, that was no problem at all. I have never felt that the constitution of the Dr Gopal Singh panel ever hindered our own working. I have never expressed any disapproval. If they were able to do anything that we were not able to, it is all the more welcome.

Q: But don't these kinds of committees undermine the status of the Minorities commission, particularly if they have political patronage?

A: You are assuming that they have official patronage; that assumption might not be correct. Of course the only thing is that the Minorities commission was originally constituted by the then Janata government whereas this high powered panel (Dr Gopal Singh's) was constituted by the present government.

Q: Just before the Congress(I) came into power Professor V. V. John and Aloo Dastur resigned. It is being said that they had personal differences with you as they felt more emphasis was being paid to problems of Muslims than other minorities.

A: Well I do not think that the resignation had anything to do with such differences. They resigned because they felt that every time there is a change of government the members of the commission should also tender their resignations. I felt that it was not a correct view because the commission does not represent the government in power. We do an independent kind of work, and whichever party forms the government we send our recommendations to it. I agree there were some differences between me and some of the members, but we were carrying on inspite of these differences.

Q: Recently in Parliament Mr Zail Singh said that there was no unanimous opinion on the recommendations, which is why the government had not implemented them.

A: I don't think that is correct. Almost all our decisions were unanimous. Our report on the minority character of Aligarh University, about the Aligarh riots, Jamshedpur riots, communal incidents in Tamil Nadu...everything was unanimous. It was only in one matter that there was difference of opinion. This was about Tyagi's Freedom of Religion Bill where I and Dr John and Dr Dastur felt that the Bill was detrimental to the interests of the Christians. Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh and Kushak Bakhula Saheb felt otherwise. So they sent differing notes. But except for this, there was no other report sent by the commission where there was any difference of opinion at all.

Q: What about the charge that the commission had been more involved with the problems of Muslims than *other minorities?*

A: I deny that charge. In fact my own feeling is that the commission has not been able to do much for the Muslims, at least not so much as it has been able to do for the other minorities. Now, Muslim problems are numerically more than the problems of other minorities. And problems like communal riots cannot be called problems of the Muslim minority alone. But the most important problems facing the Muslims, like unemployment, the problem of language, the problem of admission in schools—these have not been tackled at all. I would certainly deny the charge that the commission has been devoting itself mostly to the problems of Muslims.

Q: How and when were you informed that your term had expired?

A: I was informed on 23 February at about 4 pm by the home secretary on the telephone that my term had expired on the same day.

Q: Can you think of any reason as to why this sudden termination of your services?

A: Well, I can only think of one reason. I was protesting to the government against the cancellation of a seminar that was proposed to be held at Hyderabad. The idea of holding the seminar emanated from the government, it was not my idea at all. Even the subjects to be discussed were proposed by the home ministry. The commission met and passed a resolution agreeing to hold the seminar. At every step, we were in consultation with the home ministry. The budget was sanctioned and then ultimately the formal approval of the government was also obtained, and it was only thereafter that I issued letters to various persons inviting them to participate in the seminar. Even the list of invitees was sent to the home ministry and there was no objection at any time.

I was going to Hyderabad on 19 December to make the arrangements. Just before I left, I received a phone call from the home secretary saying that the government was reconsidering the matter and the seminar might be postponed. I asked for the reason, he could not give the reason. So I went to Hyderabad and came back. I was pressing the home secretary to tell me what the government had decided, and ultimately he told me that the government had decided to cancel the seminar. He did not give any reasons. I said I had to write to several persons informing them of the cancellation of the seminar, and so I wanted the government communicate this order to me. He told me to write on my own. I said that it was not fair on me; the decision (to cancel) had been taken by the government, and why should I take the responsibility of calling it off?

Then I wrote to the home minister requesting him to communicate the decision of the government to me in writing. It was not even acknowledged, no reply has been given. The only reply is the termination of my tenure.

CONGRESS(U)

Pawar or Ram — who's going to lead?

Suresh Ram and Suresh Kalmadi

Bombay: Aurangabad, in May, will decide whether the Congress(U) will be led by Mr Jagjivan Ram or Mr Sharad Pawar. The transition of leadership from Mr Devaraj Urs (who actually, is quite reluctant to step down), is going to be a pitched battle with the two contenders fighting through their proteges. Jagjivan Ram is using his son Suresh (of the Suresh-Shushma fame) while Sharad Pawar will fight through Suresh Kalmadi, the dynamic president of the Indian Youth Congress(U).

Suresh Ram who has no background of political activity in the Congress, has tried to assert himself in Youth Congress affairs for more than a year but with no success. He tried to disrupt the 9 August youth day rally in Delhi last year and this year's meeting of the Congress(U) Working Committee. Suresh Ram tried his best to get the AICC(U) meeting to be held in UP and raised slogans and demonstrations but he didn't succeed. Finally Aurangabad was decided as the venue. The venue is important because there is scope for manipulating delegates and mustering support in one's hometown.

At the moment Devaraj Urs seems to be on the side of Jagjivan Ram. Urs is angry with the group led by Suresh Kalmadi, Vylar Ravi and others who raised their voices against Shyam Dhar Mishra continuing as president of the UP Congress Committee. Mishra was convicted for murder and got a sentence of life imprisonment. He is out on bail. But Mishra is Devaraj Urs's protege and when Mishra handed in his resignation after he was pressurised from all sides, Urs refused to accept it initially.

Mishra, now, has promised Jagjivan Ram 40 AICC votes out of 90 from Uttar Pradesh. On Jagjivan Ram's side are people like Yunus Salim and Raj Bahadur. Sharad Pawar has the support of younger elements like P. R. Das Munhshi, A. K. Antony, Unnikrishnan, Vylar Ravi, Dharam Vir Sinha and Kishore Deo.

The process of gathering support of AICC members has started and money is said to be flowing. Wary and unwary delegates are being trapped into supporting the two contenders. Kalmadi who has shown his organisational capacity in Maharashtra as well as at the national level has a distinct edge over Suresh Ram who probably has much more financial strength. A hotelier by profession, Suresh Kalmadi is an ex-Indian Air Force pilot and rose to the limelight as Sanjay Gandhi's trouble-shooter. After the split he remained in the Congress(U) and last year he organised the spectacular demonstration outside the Maruti factory. He kept Suresh Ram out of the demonstration. He also organised the *Dindi* of the left and democratic parties and more recently the cycle *Swari* in which a few thousand unemployed youths cycled from Pune to Bombay to present a memorandum to chief minister, A.R. Antulay, during the Assembly session.

Kalmadi's demands for the unemployed are: the right to work guaranteed in the Constitution; a declaration by the government that all its policies in the field of agriculture, industry, science and technology will be tested on the touchstone of employment potential; one job for every family with a minimum salary of Rs 300 and postal order system for applying for jobs must be stopped etc, etc.

Suresh Ram, on the other hand, has enjoyed colourful notoriety. He has been found in a white Mercedes which was in the name of the dealer who was allegedly the go-between in the Jaguar deal which his father had made during his tenure as defence minister in the Janata government. He also arranged the Boat Club meeting of farmers last month which was addressed by his father, Jagjivan Ram, and Devaraj Urs. But the battle is on and, as Suresh Kalmadi sees it, it is the battle of the young against the old: Sharad Pawar (40) and Jagjivan Ram (70). It will also represent a fight between the forces of change and the forces of status quo.

However, more cynical observers say the real reason for the tendentious fight for the presidentship of the Congress (U) is that the person in this position will have a better bargaining position with Mrs Indira Gandhi, president of the Congress (I).

Olga Tellis

Kalmadi's cycle swari

TAKK

CM Gundu Rao does not like Khodays

Bangalore: The continuing dog-fight between the state CM, R. Gundu Rao and the house of Khodays—the liquor barons of the state—has reportedly thrown the proposed joint sector feeder airline service linking the southern states into a spin. The detailed project report drawn up by the TAKK (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala) Airways on the proposed third level airservice is on the verge of being shelved primarily because of what might ultimately be a rift between the state bureaucracy and the distille

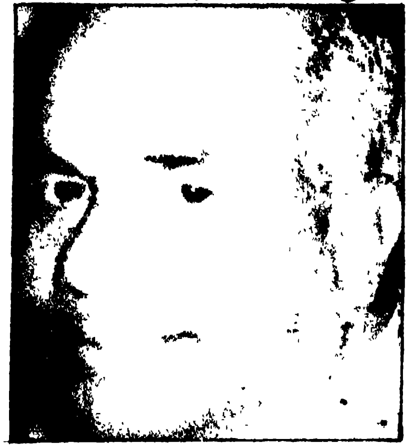
It may be recalled that the distillers owe their present status to the former CM Devaraj Urs. Gundu Rao, stalked by the shadow of his predecessor in office, has not been particularly keen on establishing rapport with the Khodays, who in turn have their own reservations about the present CM.

The move to establish a third level airservice to link tourist resorts and industrial centres achieved formal recognition with the constitution of the Gidwani Committee by the Janata union civil aviation minister, Purushottam Kaushik in April 1978. The committee had billed the Canadian Twin Otter with a passenger capacity of 20 as the most suitable for the proposed airservice—a decision seconded by Air Marshal J.Zaheer who succeeded Mr Gidwani in the committee. However, controversy was generated over the selection of an aircraft when another committee headed by Don Braganza, retired regional director of the Indian Airlines, put forward its recommendation that the Spanish Casa 212 should replace the Twin Otter. The recommendation caused a furore in aviation circles for the Casa 212 is yet to receive ratification from the regulatory agencies in the UK and the USA.

While the centre is yet to make up its mind on the issue, Vayudoot—India's premier third level airservice operating in the north-eastern region limped off to a start with two ramshackle Fokker Friendship F 27 aircraft, hired from Indian Airlines. Aviation cassandras as well as TAKK authorities are confident that the maiden service will not last long without liberal government subsidies, primarily because the F 27 is not designed to operate on air routes of average stage lengths of 200 kms. However, the launching of Vayudoot has lent credence to the contention of the TAKK authorities that a third level airservice can be rendered viable and self-supporting only if the market segments are clearly identified and tapped.

With the decision of the government to go in for a feeder service two years ago, the state government invited offers of private participation in the project. Among those private companies which had come forward were Deepak Insulators, Kirloskars and Khodays. While Deepak Insulators and Kirloskars dropped out in the early stages of the venture, Khodays indicated their willingness to invest approximately Rs 30 lakhs in the proposed air service However, inspite of the estimated internal rate of return of 10 per cent and the obvious interest of Khodays in the venture, the follow-up of the matter by the authorities and the CM is making the prospects of the southern airservice link rather bleak.
Anita Ravindran

Who is speaking the truth



Jaffar Sharief

New Delhi: Did the *Business Standard* special correspondent, S. C. Anantharaman, scoop the details of the railway budget which was presented in Parliament on 19 February (*Sunday* 1 March 1981)? Or was there no leakage? A look at the *Business Standard* of 19 February would show that the financial daily carried the details of the railway budget nearly 24 hours before the presentation. But when the ministers concerned were asked about the leakage, they preferred to bury their heads in the sand like the proverbial ostrich, to avoid the truth.

The minister of state for railways, C. K. Jaffar Sharief, seemed bent on avoiding the truth in the Rajya Sabha on 6 March. Mr Kalraj Mishra of the BJP asked a starred question (No. 255) enquiring whether the government's attention had been drawn to the news items published in newspapers that the railway budget had been leaked before it was presented in Parliament. The member also wanted to know if the government was proposing to institute an enquiry in the leakage.

The minister replied that he had indeed seen the news items regarding the leakage in the newspapers but "the question of any enquiry does not arise as there was no leakage of the railway budget for 1981-82."
Our Delhi Correspondent

MIZORAM

Laldenga returns—for peace

Aizawl: The Indian Air Force helicopter touched down at the Zemabawk army helipad near Aizawl at 9.15 am on 9 March The huge rotor blades had hardly stopped whirring when a cheerful Laldenga, the 55-year-old president of the Mizo National Front (MNF), in a coat and baggy trousers alighted with his wife, Iakdiki. He went down on his knees and kissed the soil of his homeland he had left 15 years ago in the wake of a bloody insurgency. His 15-years' absence included nine years of exile in the then East Pakistan and Karachi and six years in New Delhi.

Brig. Sailo

Although the authorities wanted to keep the rebel godfather's homecoming a secret, Aizawl was agog with the news. A rash of posters proclaiming Laldenga's return could be seen in downtown Aizawl in the early hours of 8 March. The news saw hundreds of Mizos lining up along the four km winding road overlooking the helipad. Some of the more enthusiastic, especially among the women even managed to slip past the tight security and wait on the helipad with bouquets of flowers for the president. Present at the helipad were Laldenga's agriculture graduate-turned-politician younger brother, Ngurchhina, and the Congress(I) chief, Lalthanhwala.

When Laldenga saw the crowd waving at him frantically, he asked for a public address system. Then, he read out a prepared speech, in Mizo, in which he mentioned the reason for his visit: he was going to the MNF headquarters on the forested Bangladesh-Burma border for discussions on peace. Once the peace formula is found, a delegation of the MNF would then visit Delhi to sign a final peace accord to bring down the curtain on 15 bloody years of armed insurrection. The husky-voiced Laldenga did not forget to thank Mrs Gandhi for her keenness to solve their problem.

At 11.00 am the helicopter took Laldenga to Aizawl enroute to Parva from where the MNF headquarters is a three-day journey on foot. The groundwork for Laldenga's visit was prepared by his 25-year-old St Stephen's College, Delhi, dropout-son, David Dawnmawia. David had showed up all of a sudden on 14 February at the residence of Lalthanhwala on Zarkawt Road in Aizawl to tell him of the homecoming of Laldenga.

The MNF leader's visit marks an interesting and hopeful turn in the tortuous process of finding peace, undoubtedly the most elusive commodity in strife-torn Mizoram. In July 1976 there were hopes that bloodshed would cease in Mizoram when Laldenga agreed to settle the MNF issue within the framework of the Indian Constitution. But he was put behind bars in Delhi's Tihar Jail. Again in July 1980 there was hope of peace when Laldenga signed yet another accord with the centre. The rebel chief asked his men to stop guerilla activities and New Delhi offered a reprieve. But the moves for peace were smothered when the two Mizo leaders, Laldenga and CM Brigadier Thenphunga Sailo accused each other of stalling peace moves.

Now, however, with Laldenga's arrival hope for peace is once again bright. Says Lalthanhwala, "We have at last crossed the hump and now peace is for the asking." But peace will not be so easy to come by since the ruling People's Conference members are opposed to Laldenga, though their opposition is based on personal rather than on ideological matters.

But everything depends on the Mizos who number around four lakhs. They form a vested interest in the economy, and they would not like to swap their new-found affluence with another spell of blood-letting. The MNF has also become pragmatic and wants peace. Says self-styled captain Pawlsiamliang, the MNF's Aizawl town commander, "We know we have a limit to fight. If we get statehood for Mizoram in a peace deal we know we can exercise our own choice and have our own administration." But what the outcome of the peace talks will be remains a big question mark. If all goes well the peace agreement might be signed in Delhi in June.

Laldenga with his family

Santanu Ghosh

ANDHRA PRADESH

Arrack is life

Hyderabad: Arrack, now, spells trouble in south India. As the scandal rocked Tamil Nadu and Kerala, it also left its hangover in Andhra Pradesh. First there was a controversy in 1979 regarding the former CM Dr M. Channa Reddy's decision to regroup arrack shops for auction in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad to benefit, as the opposition alleged, a contractor from Karnataka. The issue went to the High Court and even to the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the government information department issued press notes and explanations justifying the CM's action. One such press note had the words: "No mala fide intention in excise auctions." Toddy tappers who were affected by the auctions spoke out against the government and the system of auctioning the liquor shops. The government managed to hush up the whole affair by backtracking on its decisions.

Almost immediatedly after that the residents of a Hyderabad suburb, Chikkadpally, started agitations for the removal of an arrack drinking joint from that area. One of the foremost leaders of the agitation was the former Governor, Mr Ali Akbar Khan, who is also the president of the Prohibition Council. The names of Dr Channa Reddy and his contractor friend from Karnataka figured in this episode. Since the high-ups were involved the municipality and revenue and excise department officials could not remove the arrack pub from the area.

About two months ago another crisis surfaced in the state. This is remotely connected to the arrack scandal since it has to do with rectified spirit, a main ingredient for arrack. Drug manufacturers and workers in the drug industry have charged the government of starving the industry of rectified spirit (RS), while supplying the arrack makers with their quotas. The pharmaceutical industry in the state is the fourth largest in the country and employs around 60,000 workers. Due to the RS crisis there have not only been retrenchments and forced leaves in the drug industry but also an acute scarcity of life-saving drugs. Perhaps the government has a reason for keeping arrack manufacturers happy. Last year the sale of RS to arrack manufacturers, excise and proceeds from arrack shop auctions netted the government Rs 125 crores while receipts from medicinal and other preparations using alcohol or RS was a measly Rs two crores. The state's RS requirements are about 60 million litres of which 30 million litres alone are used by the arrack industry.

According to Mr G. S. Raju, president of the Andhra Pradesh unit of the Indian Pharmaceutical Association, excise and health authorities have been deaf to pleas for a pro-rata cut in the allotment of RS.

But the IPA has also retaliated by issuing a spate of hard-hitting advertisements which ask: "Arrack at the cost of life?" and "One must live even to drink arrack, musn't one?" An attempt was made to import RS from Tamil Nadu but after the recent scandal it is doubtful whether the MGR government will do anything now. Meanwhile hospitals and patients gasp for important drugs. Life may ebb but arrack must flow on, regardless.

K. K. Sastry

TIME CAPSULE

'The journey from a-history to anti-history is short'

Madras: Chaturvedi Badrinath, the controversial IAS officer is in the news again. On 10 March the Madras High Court admitted two writ petitions by him. In the first, the officer sought directions from the state and the union governments to promote him to the supertime scale of pay in the IAS with effect from 16 November 1977. (The supertime payscale of Rs 2,500 to Rs 2,750 is that which an IAS officer has to reach before he can be considered for the highest posts in the state and central governments.) Badrinath contended that he had been given assignments far below his status and that 28 junior officers have superseded him till now. The second petition was to quash the union government's confidential communication dated 7 August 1980 to the state government saying that it had decided to reject Badrinath's appeal against the supersession.

Chaturbedi Badrinath

It all began in 1975, when the idea of the time capsule was conceived. At that time Badrinath was the commissioner of the Tamil Nadu archives. The text in the capsule was being written by a faculty member of the history department of the Madras Christian College and Badrinath raised a controversy regarding the contents of the capsule. "When I raised the time capsule text, I wanted to focus attention on the state of historical studies in India, of which the time capsule was as bad an example as can be. At a still deeper level, I was trying to show that the Indian consciousness is in fact, a-historical... The journey from a-history to anti-history is short. Shorter still is the journey to fancy. The shortest, however, is a journey to collective lies. The time capsule symbolised this tragedy."

But while Badrinath felt that he was "doing his duty by pointing out the errors in the time capsule," not every government official thought the same. The chief secretary to the Tamil Nadu government charged Badrinath with attempting to sabotage the civil service from within the system. Further, by virtue of his criticism, Badrinath was charged with violation of the All-India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968. Badrinath reiterated by filing a writ petition against the government of Tamil Nadu for refusing him permission to sue the chief secretary, and thus set a precedent in the history of civil service in India. In September 1980, however, the commissioner for administrative reforms wrote to him saying that his appeal had been rejected but he did not advance any reason for the action. Meanwhile, further charges were levelled at the officer Although subsequently with changes in the central governments most of these charges were dropped, Badrinath argues in his 10 March writ petition that, "The charges were retained in the confidential roll kept of my service, putting a black mark in my career."

Badrinath is yet to win a round against the state government. But, inspite of professional challenges and problems, he has unfailingly followed his philosophical and literary pursuits. Over the last four years, he has lectured at Heidelberg University in West Germany and delivered lectures on the interpretation of Kafka's works at various Max Muller Bhavans all over the country.

Arthur Pais

DOWRY DEATH

How did Shashikala die?

Calcutta: Around 2 40 am on 15 February, 19-year-old Shashikala Sau, wife of Keshori Chand Jaiswal (21), was found dead with "several burn injuries" in a second-floor store room of a three-storey building on Dharmatola Road, Howrah. Keshori, a B.Com student of Umesh Chandra College, Calcutta, told the police who came to investigate that his wife had committed suicide by pouring kerosene on herself and lighting it. The Jaiswal Samaj (Shashikala Sau's community) however, suspects foulplay and protested against the crime. The case was taken up by the local Malipanchghora police station. The police moved on 5 March and at about 9.30 pm arrested Keshori Chand, his brother Dharam Chand and their father, Ram Jiyan Jaiswal, not on charges of murder but for using firearms which they had used against demonstrators who had assembled to protest the death.

It was the *durwan*, Kanchan Dev Singh, who suddenly saw smoke curling out from the ventilators of the second-floor store room. The *durwan's* shouts drew Dharam Chand and Keshori Chand to the store room. The locked door was broken and Shashikala was found lying dead on the floor with burn injuries. When the fire occurred Keshori's parents were not in the Dharmatola Road house. (They were in Faizabad (UP) to attend the marriage of a relative) At 3.30 am, Ram Abatar, Dharam Chand's father-in-law took a car to Shashikala's home in Amherst Street to inform her relatives of the death. Police were informed only at 6 am. Sub-inspector, Sisir Kumar Das, rushed to the spot at 6.45 am with two constables, Tulsi Adhikari and Ram Babu Singh The case appeared to be unusual and Das informed his inspector-in-charge Haridas Bose who went to investigate around 9.30 am. The police officers, however, noted that Shashikala was not totally burnt, although she had received burn injuries. Said Das· "A large portion of the deceased's light green blouse was not burnt...Her palms were not burnt Not a single one of her glass bangles was broken And most of the articles in the store room were intact." Strangely, the tongue of the deceased was protruding out her mouth.

Shashikala's body was sent for post-mortem to the Howrah General Hospital at 2.30 pm on 16 February. The post-mortem was completed within an hour and the body was cremated at the Sibpur Hanuman burning ghat. That the death was caused by burning as was stated in the post-mortem report did not satisfy the Jaiswal community. In a memorandum submitted to the district magistrate, Howrah, the chief minister and the Governor of West Bengal, the Jaiswal Samaj complained: "Shashikala Jaiswal was brutally throttled to death by Keshori Chand Jaiswal, Dharam Chand Jaiswal and conspirators and in order to give it (a) colour of suicide, kerosene oil was sprinkled on her body and then a fire was lit..." Telegrams were also sent to Mrs Gandhi and the home minister praying for "drastic action against the police officers of Malipanchghora police station...and other conspirators for the heinous murder of Shashikala Jaiswal.

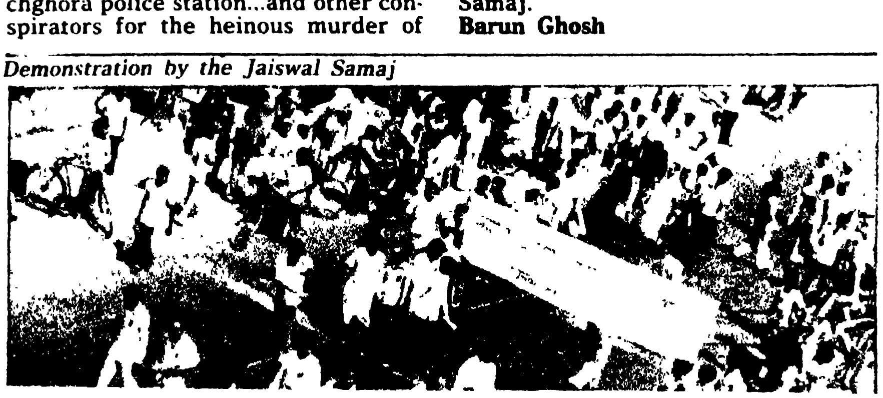
Shashikala with her husband

If it is a case of suicide as claimed by the bridegroom's family, what drove the four-months' pregnant Shashikala to commit suicide? According to her aunt, Fulbashi Devi, "She was not happy in her married life as she was always humiliated and even beaten for insufficient dowry she had brought with her to her husband's house. Keshori always told her about a Honda motorbike worth Rs 25,000 which her father had promised to give him as dowry," added Fulbashi Devi. And Shashikala's brother remembered Keshori had threatened his sister, for not bringing the bike:"*Tujhko janse mar dahunga* (I will kill you)."

The death of yet another young girl has created a stir in the Jaiswal community in West Bengal. On 18 February at 7.45 pm about 500 Jaiswals went to talk to Ramjiyan Jaiswal at his Howrah residence Thinking they had come to beat him up, he opened fire from a double-barrelled gun and a revolver. The police seized the firearms and arrested Ramjiyan Jaiswal and his two sons. Till the time of filing this report their bail pleas had not been accepted. On 28 February, the Jaiswals met at the Howrah Improvement Trust Park and condemned the murder of Shashikala. And the Jaiswal business community observed a total srike keeping their business establishments closed."We will launch a more intensive agitation if the murder of Shashikala is not properly dealt with," said a spokesman of the Jaiswal Samaj.

Barun Ghosh

Demonstration by the Jaiswal Samaj



GOOD NEWS

Autonomy for schoolchildren

The management of the Government Higher Secondary School at Dhamtari, subdivisional headquarters of Raipur district, introduced a novel do-it-yourself programme for girl students—an "autonomy day." On 6 March 1981 31 girls took over the management of the school for a day. They distributed among themselves all the work done by the school's employees—from peon to principal. The girls also conducted their own classes.

Trees to the rescue

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural Engineering department is doing fine work to check the rapid loss of hundreds of acres of arable land in the coastal areas of the state due to wind erosion. It is implementing a special wind-erosion control scheme in Tirunelveli at a cost of nearly Rs 28 lakhs. Later, the project is to be implemented also in Ramanathapuram and Kanyakumari. The scheme aims to protect 10,000 hectares over a period of five years. The work involves setting up "shelter belts" about 280 kms long, which will save 5,143 hectares from being converted into sandy wastes by coastal winds. To form the "shelter belts" saplings of selected species of trees, like *odai*, *virali*, cashew, palmyra, casuarina, jack, *amla* and tamarind, which are adaptable to dry conditions, are planted in five parallel rows across wind directions. To water the saplings, buried in the ground close to each is an earthen pot with holes at the base. The pots are filled with water regularly, and covered with a lid. The project will prevent vast stretches of fertile land from disappearing, year after year, which are ruined because of lack of adequate vegetative cover.

The Kanyakumari beach

SUBIR ROY

Shelter, and work

A specially-sheltered workshop for the mentally retarded will be built in the Dilkhusha special school at Juhu in Bombay at an estimated cost of Rs five lakhs. The workshop will employ mentally retarded senior students of the school who are jobless. Principal Sister Maria Dolores Tena hopes that the workshop will get small mechanical work offers from the industrial belt in Jogeshwari-Kandivli area. The students will paid be a salary and their work will include making cardboard, bottles and bottle-caps and also the manufacture of wooden articles. "Our labour is cheap and quality guaranteed," says Sister Tena, adding that the mentally handicapped are generally experts at mechanical and repetitive jobs. The school has 114 students and a staff of one Japanese, one Indian and three Spanish nuns, all belonging to the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Society. The school is mainly aided by the 10-year-old Parne Teachers' Association which has also raised the money for equipment needed at the workshop.

Railway station in two minutes

Mrs Gita Mukherjee, the CPI MP, made parliamentary history of sorts recently when she managed to persuade railway minister Kedar Pande to sanction a new railway junction between Bhogpur and Panskura, on the Bankpura-Howrah suburban line of the South Eastern Railway. And she managed to do this in just two minutes! Her appeal was so effective that the railway minister said yes immediately. This is certainly good news for the commuters living between Bhogpur and Panskura.

Mrs Gita Mukherjee

Great work on Operation Flood 1

A ten-member UN review mission, headed by Dr Henryk Jasiorowski of Poland, spent a month studying Operation Flood 1, our nationwide dairy development project, and pronounced it an unqualified success. They accepted that the project had already achieved some of its objectives, and was making rapid progress towards achieving its other goals: increasing the incomes of rural milk producers; increasing the availability of reasonably priced good-quality milk, and increasing the productivity of animals. The import content of dairy plant equipment has already been reduced from 60 per cent to 10 per cent. In a report to the agriculture ministry, the UN mission described the project as a successful and effective use of food aid and technical assistance for development. The mission came, in the first place, because the project involved delivery by the World Food Programme of 126,000 tonnes of skimmed milk and 42,000 tonnes of butter and oil, valued at $56.98 millions.

Doctor's address

We received a flood of enquiries about Dr Mathew George, MBBS, D. Orth, orthopaedic surgeon and consultant (Goodnews,*25 January). Here is his address: "Sharon", XXIX/283 Karimpuram Road, Cochin 682 020.*

THE WORLD

Apartheid or death?

Pieter W. Botha

Apartheid was at its bizarre best in South Africa recently: Johannesburg city counsellor David Neppe took his critically-ill father-in-law Joe Esrock to a local state hospital for whites on 7 March this year. Mr Esrock was given a pacemaker to keep his heart going; doctors advised intensive care and the services of a nurse. Because of a shortage of white nurses in Johannesburg, Mr Neppe could not find one for his father-in-law. So, he asked the hospital matron for a black nurse. The matron turned down his request, drawing his attention to the rule which forbids the use of black nurses in white hospitals. Mr Esrock died shortly and his death caused a furore in Johannesburg. Mr Neppe, who carries considerable clout in political circles, openly challenged Prime Minister Pieter W. Botha on 9 March with a powerful question: Would Botha allow a black nurse to treat him in an exclusive hospital for whites or would he stick to apartheid and accept death?

Who really killed John Wayne?

Everyone knows that the symbol of American right-wing patriotism, filmstar John Wayne, died after a painful fight with cancer. But evidence has now come to light that could prove embarrassing to those very hawks who must be seeing reruns of Wayne films at every reunion. In all likelihood John Wayne contacted cancer when shooting in 1954 for a film called *The Conqueror*. There was nothing wrong with the movie, but apparently there was everything wrong with the location—Snow Canyon, in south-east Utah, near the Nevada desert where a lot of the atomic testing was carried out. The fallout polluted the area around the testing site, including Snow Canyon. Out of the original team of 220 people who worked on that film, 91 have contacted cancer and 46 have already died of it. In fact, in 1975, Susan Hayward, the leading lady of the film, died of cancer too. This theory has not been confirmed beyond doubt, but the evidence is very strong.

John Wayne

Polanski has a ball

Celebrated film director Roman Polanski has been nominated for this year's Academy Award; but he cannot go to the US for fear of a jail term on an earlier charge of having sex with a minor girl. In the photograph above, Polanski (barechested, centre) enjoys himself at a recent Rio De Janeiro (Brazil) carnival ball. On his right (with headgear) is latest flame Thalita, a Paris-based Brazilian model.

Arming the Afghans

"We are fighting seven communist states," Afghan rebel leader Mohammad Amin Wardak told a correspondent of the French weekly, *Le Figaro*, in Paris recently. **The seven countries were those whose troops, he claimed, were present in Afghanistan: Russia, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Cuba and Vietnam. Against such an array, he claimed that the rebels had only 48,000 rifles and** barely 60,000 cartridges. Egypt was the only country which had extended substantial help to rebels. However, it is clear that Mr Wardak is being less than truthful. The Gulf News Agency reported on 8 March that Saudi Arabia **had made another donation of $ 15 million for arms to the Afghan rebels. On the same day, US defence secretary announced over television the possibility of American arms for Afghan freedom fighters.**

Briefly

This is the BBC, London

The British Foreign Office has just told the BBC (and it is legally entitled to do so) to start a Pushtu programme for listeners in Afghanistan. Transmissions to Turkey, still under military rule, and to the USSR will now be longer: all part of Mrs Thatcher's foreign policy.

Thatcher's model son

British PM Margaret Thatcher's 25-year old son, Mark Thatcher, has decided to appear in commercials to promote a particular brand of Scotch whisky; this was disclosed by a Japanese liquor dealer in Tokyo recently.

Mark Thatcher

Palestinian Air Force

They do not have the sophisticated Phantoms or Mirages or Migs or Jaguars; what the do have is guts—even if their ability is far less potent than their courage. But the Palestinian Liberation Front, one of the more militant groups, has just launched a new form of warfare against Israel; its commandos are entering Israel with the help of low-flying gliders which can snoop under the Israeli radar. The first guerrilla captured on a glider mission became an Israeli prisoner in the first week of March.

Liberation

Something genuinely strange is happening in China—even the sacrosanct army generals are coming under attack in the public media. One poet has just got this verse published in the *Liberation Daily*: ***Generals wear medals/Tablets recording their merits are placed beside their tombs/The bloodstained bones of the soldiers rot in the soil/And have long since been forgotten.***

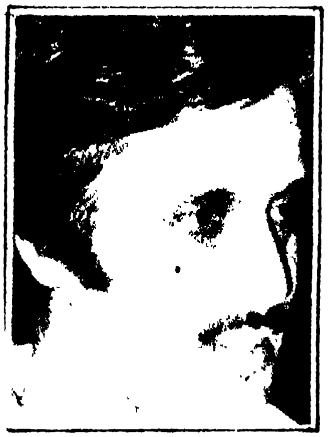
So much liberation may not be considered particularly good for a liberated nation.

KHAAS BAAT

S*anjeev Kumar* appears to have undergone a change of heart. Single girls no longer attract him despite all the tempting confections they prepare for him alone. The hero is now on the look-out for married actresses and one seems to have caught his fancy: *Moushumi*, the pretty Bengali girl. The two are working together on *Itni si baat* and how! They report for shooting together even on outdoor locations. And the fact that they are neighbours can hardly be an excuse for such togetherness. By the look of things it appears that Sanjeev Kumar is yet to get over his weakness for Bengali heroines, what with *Suchitra Sen*, his open admiration for *Jaya Bachchan* and now Moushumi. Of course, the heroine loves food and often cooks sea-food, a favourite of Sanjeev's, which has further strengthened the relationship. Add to that Moushumi's niceness—not easily detected on the sets—and naughtiness. Surely, one cannot blame Sanjeev for his 'friendship'.

DURGAPRASAD

Moushumi: wondering where Sanjeev is


JAYANT DAS

Deepak Parashar

Now that *Raj Babbar* and *Deepak Parashar* have earned their quota of popularity thanks to *Insaaf ka Tarazu*, the two stars are following very different schedules of work. Raj Babbar is taking it easy doing just one shift and generally helping wife *Nadira* direct the stage play *Yahudi ki Ladki*. Deepak appears to have a heavier work plan. He has signed on more than 30 films and still seems to have time to accompany the one-time Miss India and currently a lovely model, *Anita Reddy*.

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DURGAPRASAD

Raj Babbar: taking it easy

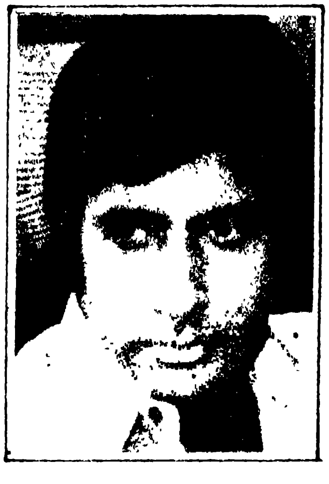
R*eeta Bhaduri* and *Kiran M. Kumar* have become the big-hit pair of the Gujarati screen. In fact, they are being compared with hit duos like *Dharmendra* and *Hema Asrani*, and *Bindiya*. Well, Dharmendra and Hema have made quite a success of their private lives and the grapevine has it that Asrani and Bindiya too have been meeting rather frequently off the sets. So, gentle readers you shouldn't really be surprised, if Reeta and Kiran try to hit it off in their private lives too.

R*ajendra Kumar*, the man with the midas touch has done it again. He has beaten all other star-fathers by launching his son's career successfully. Indeed, *Kumar Gaurav* has been a success in *Love Story* which has broken records in Punjab and the north Indian circuits, or so the family circles say. Gaurav seems to have suddenly become the epitome of confidence and it shows even in the way he walks. At the moment, the dear boy is of course busy *paav-padoing* (touching the feet) of any and every elder who comes within his touching distance. Let's hope the blessings that he is gathering thus, will carry him well into his future life.

The Pandit family has invaded the film industry, lock-stock-and barrel. *Sulakshana* has already made it big, if not with her acting at least with her songs. She bagged the Lions award prize for the best song of 1980—*Tumse Kahna Hai* in *Chehre Pe Chehra*. And younger sister, *Vijayeta*, has created something of a sensation with her first role in *Love Story*. But so much for the girls. Brothers *Jatin* and *Mandhir* have now stolen the limelight. They have three songs in *Dil Hi Dil Mein* to their credit, with Mandhir doing the lyrics and Jatin handling the orchestra. Well good luck to the Pandits, not often do we see a whole family succeeding in an industry that is not a family business.

It is being whispered that *Amitabh Bachchan* may soon become the Saigal of the Eighties. Reason: he is increasingly singing more and more of his own songs. Now this is not done! Or playback singers will be without jobs.

Amitabh Saigal Bachchan



DURGAPRASAD

Vinod and Bindiya: they look carefree

DURGAPRASAD

Three cheers! *Vinod Mehra* is no longer sulking. Wife *Meena* has suddenly decided to grant him a divorce. This was probably a surprise to Mehra Saab, especially after all the bitterness that resulted fron the divorce. The deal, everyone says, has been settled amicably. But now Vinod Mehra is paying all his attentions to *Bindiya* who has been in almost every movie starring Vinod. Though the roles she plays are often guest appearances. If I know Vinod well, he will not be satisfied with his "friend" Bindiya playing the guest too long.

KHAAS BAAT

Shatrughan Sinha is tired of picking up quarrels with his colleagues at Bombay. And so, he has now turned to the south. The latest from him is about *Rajnikant*: the superstar is copying Shatru's style of speaking, his style of acting, his mannerisms and so on. Rajni's hands are too full and so he has not yet managed to come up with a retort, but his fans are really cut up about the whole affair. They have got together and listed over two dozen 'mannerisms' invented by Rajni and sent them to Shatru to emulate any one of them. For all we know, the list might really be useful to Shatru, who is due to play the very role made famous by Rajni, in a Tamil hit, in *Dil e Naadan* directed by *Sridhar*, who reaped a fortune through the Tamil hit.

DURGAPRASAD

Shatru: living up to his name?

While *Rajnikant* may have objections to his wife being interviewed, he appears to have set different standards for himself. Met by a young journalist who confessed that he had not seen any of Rajni's films but who wanted an interview with the actor, Rajni took him to a room away from his secretary and producers. He tossed a cigarette into his mouth, played around with his hair and produced some of his mannerisms, and rounded off the interview with a broad grin on his face, saying, "Don't waste your time seeing my movies, this is what I do, day in and day out."

There is this man who is most sought-after in Madras film circles. No, wait. He is not an actor, neither can he be one of our southern bosomy belles. Nor is he a director, a producer, a script-writer or a techinician. He is a film historian and *Anandan* is his name. Remarkably knowlegeable and efficient, he knows the A to Z of films people in films made in all four southern languages, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese. He has a photographic memory for details few would care to remember about. Anandan, popularly referred to with the prefex "film news," is a man of inexhaustible patience: he answers all queries with a smile, a rare quality in the rat-race film industry. A few years ago he compiled a directory of the film industry. It contained addresses of film artistes, directors, technicians and even film scribes. Anandan being a stickler for detail did not leave out the telephone numbers of the film actresses!

Rati Agnihotri: all set for Bombay

H R NAGRAJ

Protective husband with wife Latha

The hazards of being a film-star's wife is telling on newly-wed *Latha, Rajnikant's* wife. Much as she might try living an 'ordinary' life, she can't, for desperate journalists wait for her at the college gate. But Latha will not talk to them outside the college gates and hubby wants no interviews at home, but the interviewers will not let go.

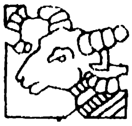
Suman

Did marriage affect his performance? No, said superstar *Kamalahasan* during an hour-long gruelling programme recently, when the star was made to answer a whole list of inane, routine questions. Indeed, come to think of it, *Raam Laxman* is doing pretty well and *Meendum Kokila* has been a big hit. And incidentally, both the films were made after his marriage. *Raja Parvai*, his own film is awaiting release. Surely, all that could not be a sign of a slump in performance.

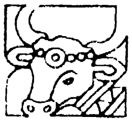
From near jail to the jury. That's *Balu Mahendra* for you. Those expecting the well-known director to spend his days with his lawyer were surprised beyond measure to see his name appear on the list of jurors for the National Film Festival that is to be held shortly. Balu is going to have a real busy schedule, what with photographing, directing and now a member of the jury.

PIOUSJI

Beginning 5 April
This week the Sun Mercury and Venus are in Pisces, Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto are in Virgo, Rahu is in Cancer and Ketu is in Capricorn. The Moon will be moving through Aries, Taurus, Gemini, and Cancer from Pisces

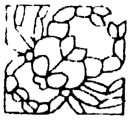


ARIES (15 April—14 May) Your health will show signs of improvement this week. Financially you will find yourself in a better position. Success will appear within your reach. The time is particularly favourable for matters related to property. Your domestic affairs will make steady progress. Family members will be helpful. But you are advised to exercise caution in love affairs. **Good dates:** 5, 7 and 11. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This week has a lot of adventure in store for you. Results will be commensurate with your efforts. The time is particularly favourable for sportsmen. Businessmen will also prosper. Your domestic front will be the source of both comfort and joy. Letters should bring good tidings. You are advised to seek and act upon the advice of elders. **Good dates:** 6, 8 and 10. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.

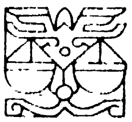
GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This should prove to be a very successful week for you. Your hunches will prove invaluable. New friends will render service to you or at least provide you with inspiration. You may have to undertake a journey which will be profitable in the long run. Children will contribute to your happiness. The time is not favourable for romance. Look after your health. **Good dates:** 5, 8 and 10. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 8 and 10. **Favourable direction:** South.



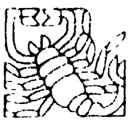
CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week has mixed fortunes in store for you. Unwise investments will result in financial loss. On the other had, lovers will meet with success. Elders and those in authority will treat you with respect. You will be required to spend some more time with your family. Children will be very demanding. You are advised to check extravagance and not to lose your temper. **Good dates:** 5, 6 and 8. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.

LEO (15 August—14 September) Businessmen will face minor difficulties this week. However, they will overcome these by sheer dint of hard work and determination. Others will gain through the occult. Travel and financial gains are in store for you. You will be required to take reasonable risks on your professional front. You are advised to keep up your correspondence with friends and relatives. **Good dates:** 6, 8 and 10. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 7. **Favourable direction:** East.

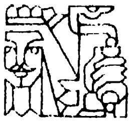
VIRGO (15 September—14 October) A great opportunity to improve your financial condition will come your way this week. Do not fritter it away. Promotions and transfers are also indicated. However, you will encounter opposition You are advised to consolidate your gains, forge ahead with your affairs and to check extravagance. **Good dates:** 7, 8 and 11. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.



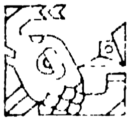
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Your professional front may suffer this week. But, given your determination and grit, you may just succeed in overcoming your problems. Gain through speculation is indicated Secret matters will make steady progress. Lovers will find each other incompatible. An elderly female relative will oppose you quite unreasonably. **Good dates:** 6, 10 and 11. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This week will restore lost fortune and happiness to you Problems, if not solved, will at least cease to worry you. Employers and seniors will extend a helping hand. You may be required to play host to friends and relatives. Your domestic front will be calm. You are advised to guard against evil influences and against the ill-health of a family member. **Good dates:** 5, 9 and 10. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.

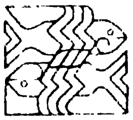


SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Your run of good fortune will continue unabated this week. Enterprise and gumption will prove to be your greatest assets. A splendid opportunity will come your way towards the end of the week and you must take full advantage of it. Any new ventures launched by you will be appreciated and helped by friends. Let your intuitions be your guide. **Good dates:** 8, 10 and 11. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 6. **Favourable direction:** West.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Your stars are very favourable this week. You will receive invaluable help from unexpected and often secret sources. Womenfolk will also prove helpful to you. You may also be required to make suitable changes on your professional front and in your future plans. Do not be erratic and do not lose your temper. **Good dates:** 7, 9 and 10. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 9 **Favourable direction:** East

AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Your financial condition will improve dramatically this week. Yet you may have to go in for fresh loans to assist a friend or a family member A new friendship is in store for you. The time is particularly favourable for those connected with the arts and literature. You may have to undertake a short journey. You are advised to make the most of opportunities. **Good dates:** 8, 9 and 11. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North-west.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) A timely and well-deserved promotion will crown you this week. But you might incur medical expenses. A distant relative or friend may lead you astray. Letters will bring good tidings. There are indications of gain through speculation. You will be called upon to shoulder new responsibilities on your professional front. Do not shirk them. You might have to do a bit of travelling. **Good dates:** 5, 6 and 9. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 5 and 8. **Favourable direction:** East.

Political forecast for 1981: The period between July and September is critical for the British government; Mrs Thatcher may face serious problems as a result of industrial conflict France will pursue a more aggressive foreign policy. Italian economy will remain unstable. Religious organisations all over Europe will emerge more powerful The Pope will not keep good health. Natural calamities and major political changes are in store for Europe in general. Russian influence will increase in this region. A fascist movement is likely in West Germany.

AMRITLAL

this india

prize rs 30 for the entry given first

UJJAIN: A swarm of bees made a stinging attack on politicians, pressmen, police and a number of other persons assembled to greet the Madhya Pradesh ministers at the Circuit House here, making them run helter-skelter on the auspicious *Mahashivratri* day. The ministers, who later arrived to proceed to offer *pooja* at the historic temple of Lord Mahakaleshwar, were hurriedly taken into safe rooms, the doors of which were then shut. Some of the victims carrying garlands for the ministers used them to ward off the insects' sudden attack. Newsmen including a reporter of a news agency and a visiting Bhopal based correspondent of a New Delhi English daily, had to seek shelter in suites reserved for VIPs. Only one minister, who preferred to travel by bus instead of using his private vehicle, was spared by the bees—*Indian Express* (Daljit Singh, Chandigarh)

NEW DELHI: Even before the question hour began in the Lok Sabha, speaker Balram Jakhar's attention was focussed by the congregation of almost all women members on one bench on the Treasury benches. Expressing concern at this unexpected show of "power" by the weaker sex the speaker remarked: "What is cooking there? Why are you all clubbed together? This seems to be a commandeered move for what? The women members were naturally pleased. The speaker then requested them to confine their "unity of benches only" and not otherwise. Explaining their strategy Mrs Madhuri Singh said it had been done to catch the speaker's attention so that they could also have the opportunity to put questions—*Deccan Herald*(D. N. Deshpande, Karnataka)

AJMER: How cussed can man become? Recently Mr Gir Raj of Purani Mandi, Ajmer was crushed to death by a Rajasthan Roadways bus. After postmortem the police handed over the unidentified body to a harijan for burial. He was paid Rs 50 for undertaking the job. The harijan, however, gave it to another harijan with Rs 40. He in turn passed on the body to a third person along with Rs 30 and he buried it. Meanwhile Mr Gir Raj's parents were conducting a frantic search for their missing son. Ultimately they came to know about the buried body and took it out. They performed the last rites according to Hindu custom—*Times of India* (S. M. Mehta, Chandigarh)

ANDHRA PRADESH: Some Andhra legislators liken their chief minister Anjiah to *Anjaneya* (Hanuman) for he did something which the last named did when he presented himself before *Sita* in *Lanka* after locating her in the *Ashoka Vatika*. The parallel here is drawn to the premature leakage of news (by AIR and Dooradarshan) that he was being appointed chief minister even before formal announcement came from Mrs Gandhi. He prostrated himself (figuratively speaking) before her lest she got angry with him as the monkey God did to prove his identity before *Sita*. Finally, when *Sita* was fully convinced that he was none other than her Lord's representative and blessed him, *Hanuman* went berserk with joy and on his return asked his monkey-followers to plunder the forest of all fruits and enjoy themselves. So did Anjiah when he got the smile of approval from his supreme leader. He made 61 of his followers ministers——*Blitz* (Pannalal Paul, Maibang)

AHMEDABAD: The first intimate contact between state finance minister Sanat Mehta and inspector general of police P. N. Writer was through a *lathi* when the latter was DIG Baroda Range. After taking over as IGP on Saturday last (28 February), Mr Writer during a courtesy call on Mr Mehta recalled the incident during the Mahagujrat movement. The minister said he had been beaten with *lathis* by almost all the top ranking police officers in the state today. He said he still remembers the one from Mr Writer on his leg was the hardest, confining him to bed for several days—*Indian Express* (C. Y. Rao, Baroda)

NEW DELHI: Finance minister R. Venkataraman on Friday (27 February) advised those going abroad under Foreign Travel Scheme to "take a hair-cut and then go abroad." Amidst laughter in the Lok Sabha, Mr Venkataraman gave the above advice to Mr Ram Gopal Reddy, who had complained of very high hair cut charges abroad. Mr Reddy had pleaded that the government should raise present FTS allowance from 500 dollars to 1,000 dollars, looking to high costs in foreign countries. He pointed out that a cup of tea cost Rs 10 to 15 and hair cut Rs 50 to 60 in some countries and the persons were forced to borrow from others. Mr Venkataraman, however, made it clear that he did not propose to make any change in the prsent limit of 500 dollars—*Patriot* (Ranbir Singh, Rohtak)

without comment

I have made him (A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhuri) understand the question. But I am helpless to get the reply out of him. If you (opposition members) want, I can make him understand the reply as well—M. Hidayatullah, Rajya Sabha chairman.

My minister will supply the briefs. That is my right, that is my duty—C. M. Stephen, union minister for communications

Is Makwana (Yogendra Makwana) a minister for harijan affairs?—Madhavsinh Solanki, CM of Gujarat on Yogendra Makwana's accusation that the Solanki government has done nothing to help harijans

You (R. Venkataraman) should go to the villages and see what type of budget you should frame—Moolchand Daga, Congress(I) member, in Lok Sabha

Is there anything wrong if a secretary is transferred for incurring the displeasure of the chief minister?—A. R. Antulay, CM of Maharashtra

Power politics in this country has depended on caste—A. B. Vajpayee

India is democratic, secular and socialist only because it is Hindu—Balasaheb Deoras, RSS chief, in *Organiser*

Dissent is normal in politics. It cannot be abolished—milk will boil, what is important is that it should not spill over—Vishwanath Pratap Singh, CM of UP in *Weekend Review*

This is not a republic of which I can be proud of being President—President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr of Iran

I am lacking commonsense—Speaker Balram Jakhar, in Lok Sabha

Sheikh (Abdullah) always browbeats the Centre when he is cornered by his misdeeds—Bhim Singh, joint secretary, All-India Congress(U) Committee

We are a serious political party. We don't believe in monkey business—Jyoti Basu, CM of West Bengal

I have become sceptical about the rule of law—S. L. Shakdher, chief election commission.

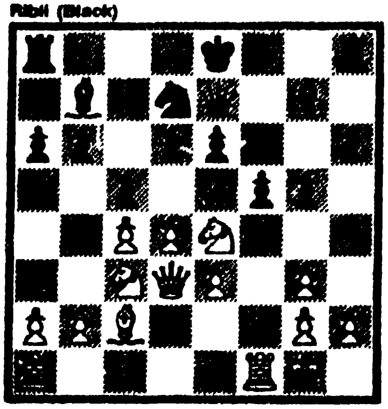
The problem in Bengal is that everyone wants to make 'art' films. We can't have a Rene or a Goddard at the drop of a hat—Aparna Sen

Marxism is morally, spiritually and materially bankrupt—Margaret Thatcher, British PM

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

chess

Ribli (Black)



Romanishin (White) to move
Position after Black's 15th move

Towards the centre

ALL RULES have their exceptions, particularly in chess, where almost any attempt to lay down firm principles will be thwarted at some time or other by a player of imagination and vision. I give today a classic example. Every club player knows that, given a choice of pawn captures, one should always take *towards* the centre. It is part of the ABC of chess theory, yet in the following game the highly inventive young Soviet grandmaster Oleg Romanishin breaks the rule and wins brilliantly Being a player of conservative tastes, I still somehow mistrust his idea, for had he not won quickly in the middlegame, he would most certainly have suffered in the ending, but the fact remains that it worked for one game at least and spectacularly so

White· O Romanishin Black Z. Ribli Queen's Indian Defence Riga 1979

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. N—KB3, P—K3; 3. P—QB4, P—QN3; 4. N—B3, B—N2; 5. B—N5, P—KR3; 6. B—R4, P—KN4. Generally accepted as Black's most aggressive and best The weakening of his kingside is not so serious as he can always castle long

7. B—N3, N—R4; 8. P—K3, N x B; 9. BP x N?!! Completely anti-positional but the KB file gives him attacking chances Not unlike the King's Gambit. The normal recapture 9. RP x N is known to lead to a very comfortable game for Black, who castles long and then advances his 'weak' kingside pawns Romanishin's idea is to keep the Black king in the centre by tying him to the defence of the KBP, but this is easier said than done.

9. . . B—N2; 10. B—Q3, P—Q3; 11. O—O, N—Q2; 12. B—B2, Q—K2; 13. Q—Q3, P—QR3?! Preparing a mistaken plan. On the immediate 13 . . P—QB4, 14. N—QN5 is embarrassing, but the natural continuation of 13. . O—O—O followed by the advance of the KR and KN pawns seems better Maybe he was afraid of (after 13 O—O—O) 14. P—QR4, P—QR4; 15. QR—N1 followed by P—QN4

14. N—Q2, P—QB4 He could still get back on the right track with 14 P—KR4 or 14. O—O—O

15. N(Q2)—K4, P—B4; bringing to fruition his faulty plan, but it was by now too late to alter course anyway

DIAGRAM

16. P x P!! A brilliant piece sacrifice which rips Black to pieces Clearly Ribli had overlooked or underestimated it

16. . . N x P; For if 16 . P x N, 17 N x P, B x N, (17 . O—O—O, 18 N x P+ K—N1, 19 R—B7) 18. Q x B, R—QN1; 19. Q—N6+ and 20. R—B7.

17. N x P+ K—B1; The position still looks unclear as the NQ6 is in trouble (e.g. 18. Q—Q2, R—Q1), but Romanishin produces another surprise.

18. N x P! P x N Or 18. . . N x Q; 19. N x Q+ K x N; 20. B x N with two extra pawns if also some technical problems.

19. Q x P+ K—N1; 20. N—Q6, Q—K1; Forced· 20. . . B x N; 21. Q x B+ costs the rook in the corner.

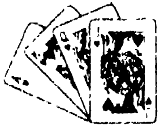
21. QR—Q1 If at once 21. N—B7 Black as 21. . . Q x P+ 22. K—R1, R—KB1.

21. . . R—QB1; 22. N x P, R—B2; 23. P—QN4 The straw which breaks the defence's back. White opens the diagonal QN3—KN8 for his bishop.

23. . . N—K3; 24. P—B5, P—KR4; 25. R—Q6, R—R3; 26. R x N! Resigns. If 26. . . R x R; 27. Q—R7 mate or 26. . . Q x N; 27. B—N3.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



'You bridge writers don't live in our world at all', a correspondent informs me. 'Look at the bidding and play of this hand at our club'.

Dealer, West. Game all

♠ A 3
♥ J 10 9 6 3
♦ J 6
♣ Q 8 7 4

♠ Q 10 7 6 5 4 2
♥ K 4
♦ A
♣ A 9 3

N
W E
S

♠ J
♥ 7
♦ K 9 8 7 5 4 3 2
♣ J 10 2

♠ K 9 8
♥ A Q 8 5 2
♦ Q 10
♣ K 6 5

Considering that both sides were vulnerable, the bidding was admittedly frisky:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1♠	No	2♦
2♥ (?)	2♠	3♥	4♦ (?)
4♥ (?)	dble	No	No
No			

Both bids by South were dangerous and unjustified. However, as an earlier Terence observed, *fortes Fortuna adjuvat.*

After winning the first trick with the Ace of diamonds, West switched to a spade, won in dummy Declarer ~~led~~ the Jack of hearts and, not giving the finesse much chance, went up with the Ace West, who was poised to win with the King, failed to withdraw this card in time and so played it under the Ace. South eliminated the spades, ruffing high in dummy, to arrive at this position:

♠ —
♥ 10 6 3
♦ J
♣ Q 8 7 4

♠ Q 10 7 6
♥ 4
♦ —
♣ A 9 3

N
W E
S

♠ —
♥ —
♦ K 9 8 3 2
♣ J 10 2

♠ —
♥ Q 8 5 2
♦ Q
♣ K 6 5

Displaying a flash of genius, South exited with a low heart, allowing West to win with the 4 Now the defence could make only one trick in clubs and none in diamonds, because South's diamond went away on dummy's long club. Clearly, if declarer draws the trump in the diagram position, he must lose two clubs and a diamond, because East will gain an entry in clubs.

TERENCE REESE

stamps

Among recent stamps from Samoa is a series showing American whalers which used to visit the Samoan islands a century or more ago. The 12-sene stamp features the William Hamilton, which called at Apia in 1834 after rounding the Horn and crossing the Pacific from her home port of Bedford, Mass. Almost 600 stamps of Samoa are among those listed, illustrated and priced in the 1981 edition of the British Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue (Stanley Gibbons, 1,190 pp, £12.50). An innovation is the pricing of Victorian and Edwardian issues on cover as well as in mint and used condition The first Samoan stamps, issued in 1877 by the editor of *The Samoan Times*, are worth at least twenty times more on original covers than as used singles

C. W. HILL

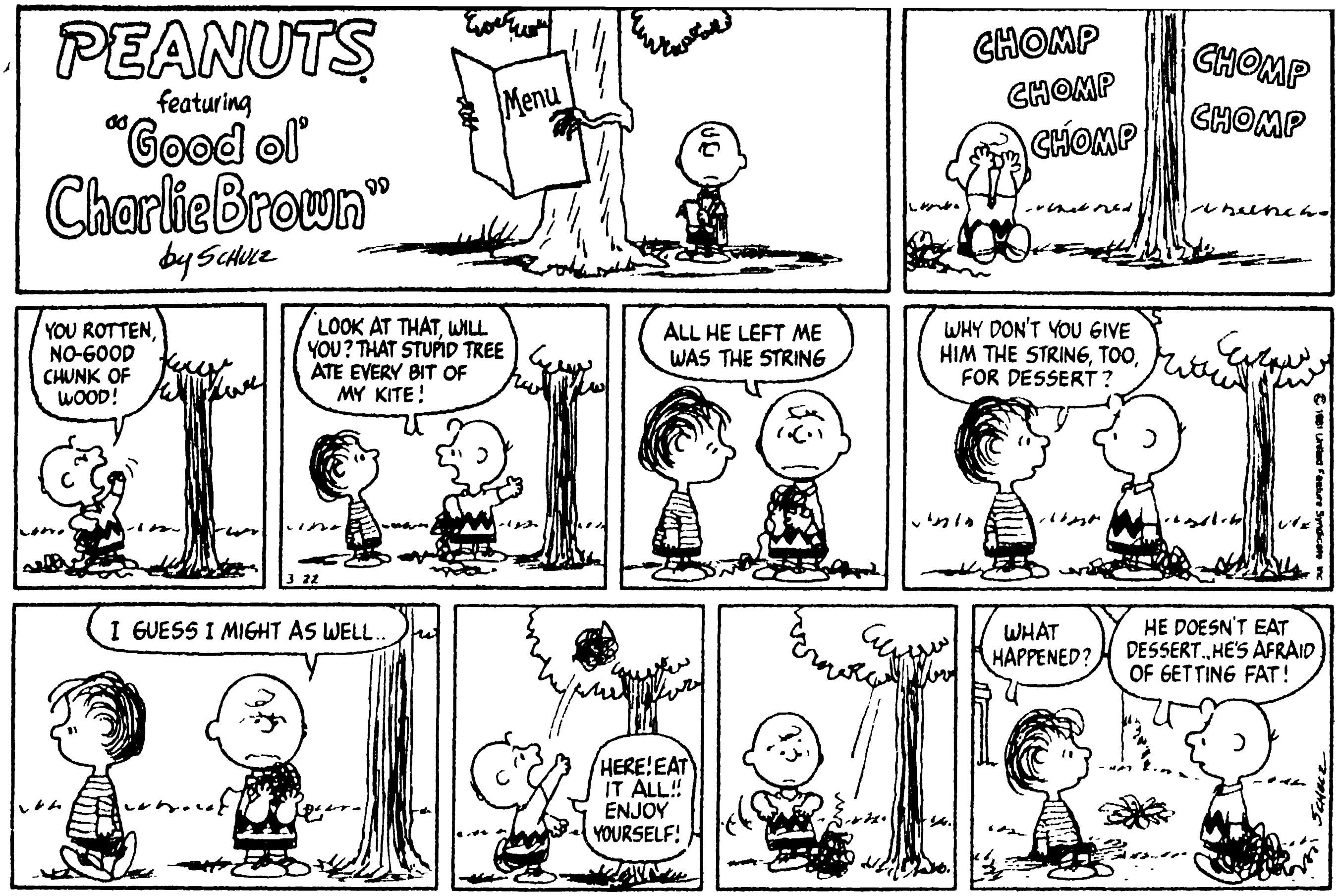
quiz

QUESTIONS

1. With what game would you associate the scrum?
2. What is the Stockholm Bloodbath?
3. Shock is defined as acute progressive circulatory failure in which defective tissue perfusion occurs. This definition is derived from the constant feature of psychological shock, namely the failure of adequate blood flow through the capillaries. What is the commonest cause of shock?
4. With what would you associate the Arlberg technique?
5. The theory of sets was created between 1874 and 1897 by a German mathematician and logician. What was his name?

ANSWERS

1. Rugby. It is one of the two basic pieces or formation of the game.
2. It refers to the execution of 82 people by the crowned, hereditary king of Sweden, Christian II, in 1520.
3. Haemorrhage. It results in a diminished return of venous blood to the heart, causing a fall in the blood pressure in the arteries.
4. Skiing; the technique was devised by Hannes Schneider of St Anton, Austria and has led to the present form of skiing.
5. Georg Cantor.


PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol' Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ
Menu
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
YOU ROTTEN, NO-GOOD CHUNK OF WOOD!
LOOK AT THAT, WILL YOU? THAT STUPID TREE ATE EVERY BIT OF MY KITE!
3 22
ALL HE LEFT ME WAS THE STRING
WHY DON'T YOU GIVE HIM THE STRING, TOO, FOR DESSERT?
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I GUESS I MIGHT AS WELL..
HERE! EAT IT ALL!! ENJOY YOURSELF!
WHAT HAPPENED?
HE DOESN'T EAT DESSERT.. HE'S AFRAID OF GETTING FAT!
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MP WHO GOT FED UP

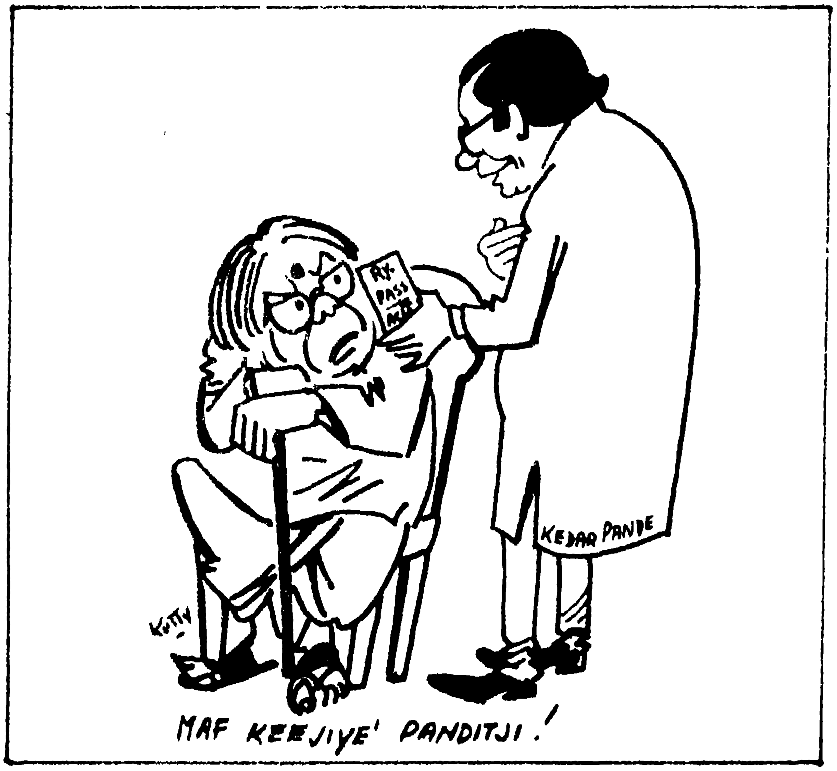
ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN, the MP from Kanpur, is one of the rising young stars on the ruling party benches.

Like some other MPs (Purabi Mukherjee, for instance, who got a phone bill for a period when her house was locked up) Arif Khan had also been having a great deal of trouble with the telephone at his Delhi residence. This in itself is not very unusual—the telephone system in the capital must easily be among the worst in the world. Khan kept complaining to the telephone authorities, and since he was an MP somebody would invariably turn up to "repair" the phone. But if you think that means the phone got better—not a chance. Khan finally got fed up.

One day he pulled the phone out of the socket, put it in a bag, and took it to Parliament. His intention: he wanted to give back this useless phone to the concerned minister, the garrulous but inefficient Mr C. M Stephen, and he wanted to do this in the house, in front of all the MPs. After all, Stephen had once arrogantly said that those who were not happy with their telephones could return the instruments. But at the last minute some of his friends felt that it would not "look good" if a ruling party MP made such a dramatic gesture against the government on the floor of Parliament, and so Khan chickened out. He did surrender the phone, but quietly, to the Speaker, with a polite letter saying that he had expected the instrument to function, but since it was not working, he was returning it as publicly suggested by Stephen.

MALKHAN SINGH

THE inability of the police to catch the now nationally famous dacoits has caused a public furore. By 7 March, the UP poilice had in fact encircled the dreaded Malkhan Singh and his gang, and his arrest was expected, according to Mr V. K. Jain, DIG, Kanpur. But the next day an agitated Mr V. P. Singhal, DIG, anti-dacoity operations, told pressmen that Malkhan Singh had escaped again. Anyone who knew anything knew that Malkhan Singh was hiding in the jungles of Bharakua at that time—but he still escaped. The next day, the chief ministers of UP and MP met in the heart of dacoit territory, in Datia district's Senwara *tehsil*, and swore to end the terror of Malkhan Singh. At this *mela* the two CMs brought along more than 30 officials, two helicopters and 108 state owned cars of UP and MP. The discussions with officials, who had come all the way from the capitals, lasted just 32 minutes; the rest of the time the two CMs spent in each other's company. UP CM V. P. Singh got very sentimental about a policeman who had died in an encounter with dacoits, but when someone asked whether the government would provide some employment to the policeman's widow, Mr V. P Singh's Sancho Panza, UP home minister Mr Rajendra Tripathi, piped up, "We shall see.. if there is any rule to that effect."


RY. PASS M.P.
KEDAR PANDE
Kutty
MAF KEEJIYE' PANDITJI !

TOUGH CUSTOMER

OUR well-known, Yogi has finally succeeded in getting some vital spare parts for his private plane. He initially wanted to get these parts without paying any duty, but an adamant customs officer refused to allow this—neither bribes nor threats worked. Those spare parts were then airlifted to Nepal, and an effort was made to bring them in through that border. But as luck would have it, the same customs officer turned up to block the passage again. Finally the spare parts did come—after the duty was paid.

WHAT NEWS OF MANEKA GANDHI?

AND this is the latest from the Mrs Amteshwar Anand-Maneka Gandhi front. Mrs Anand, after a period of hibernation, has become active again. Her sympathisers in the Congress(I) have even, it is said, contacted some opposition leaders for help in the coming battles. Not only this, Messrs Jagdish Tytler and Sagar Suri have organised a house in Delhi's posh Vasant Vihar for Mrs Anand's exclusive use. Some friends of the much-devalued Maneka Gandhi have suggested to her that she shift to this new house, leaving her mother-in-law's house. But she can't, isn't it?

TAILPIECE: Just in case anyone, but anyone, is interested in the doings of that briefly luminous Lok Dal foreign minister S. N. Mishra and that ever luminous Congress stalwart Tarakeshwari Sinha, here is what they are up to: both of them have become very close to Raj Narain these days. This is the latest dimension in opposition politics. Is this caucus of three trying to become another national alternative?

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

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SUNDAY

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THE HUNT FOR PHOOLAN DEVI

Nearly 100 errors in GANDHI

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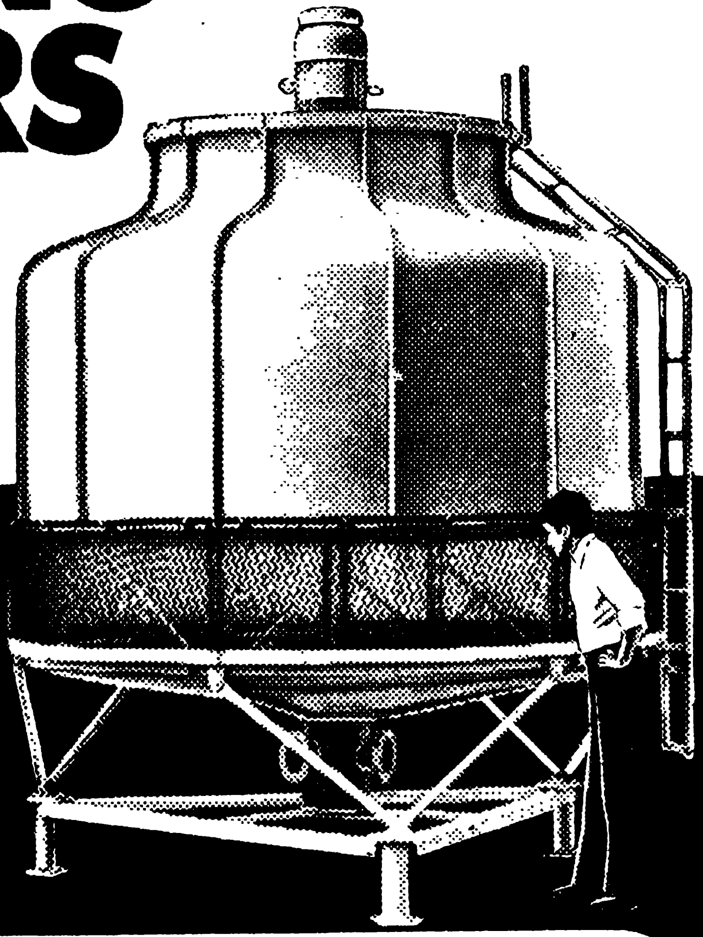

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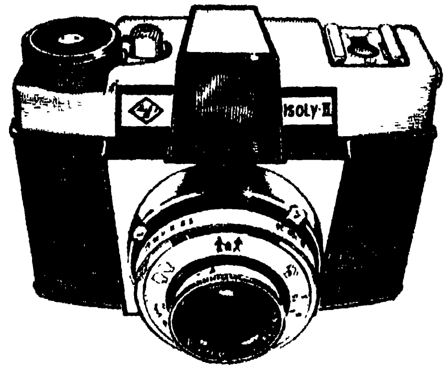

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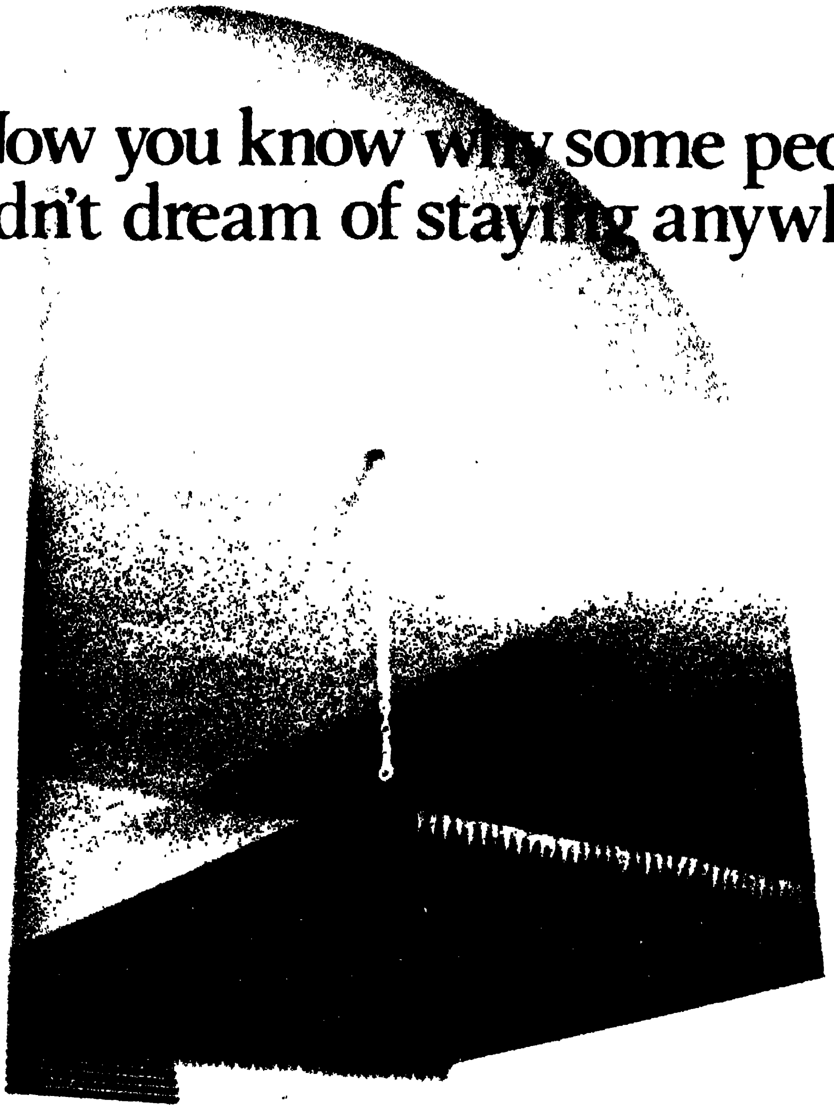

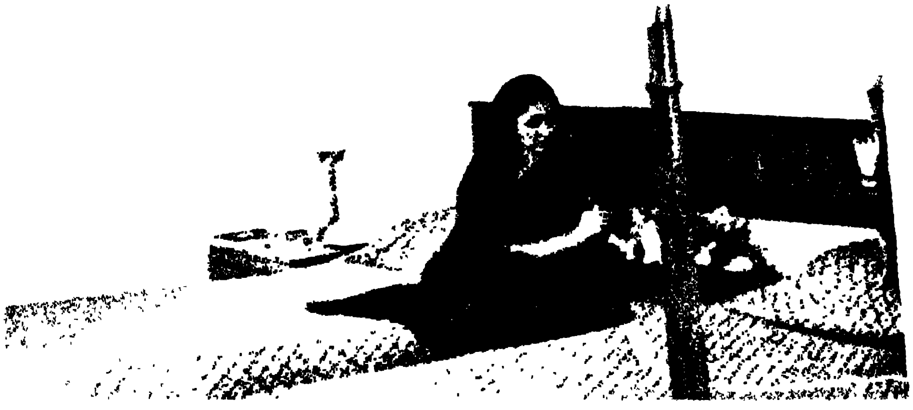

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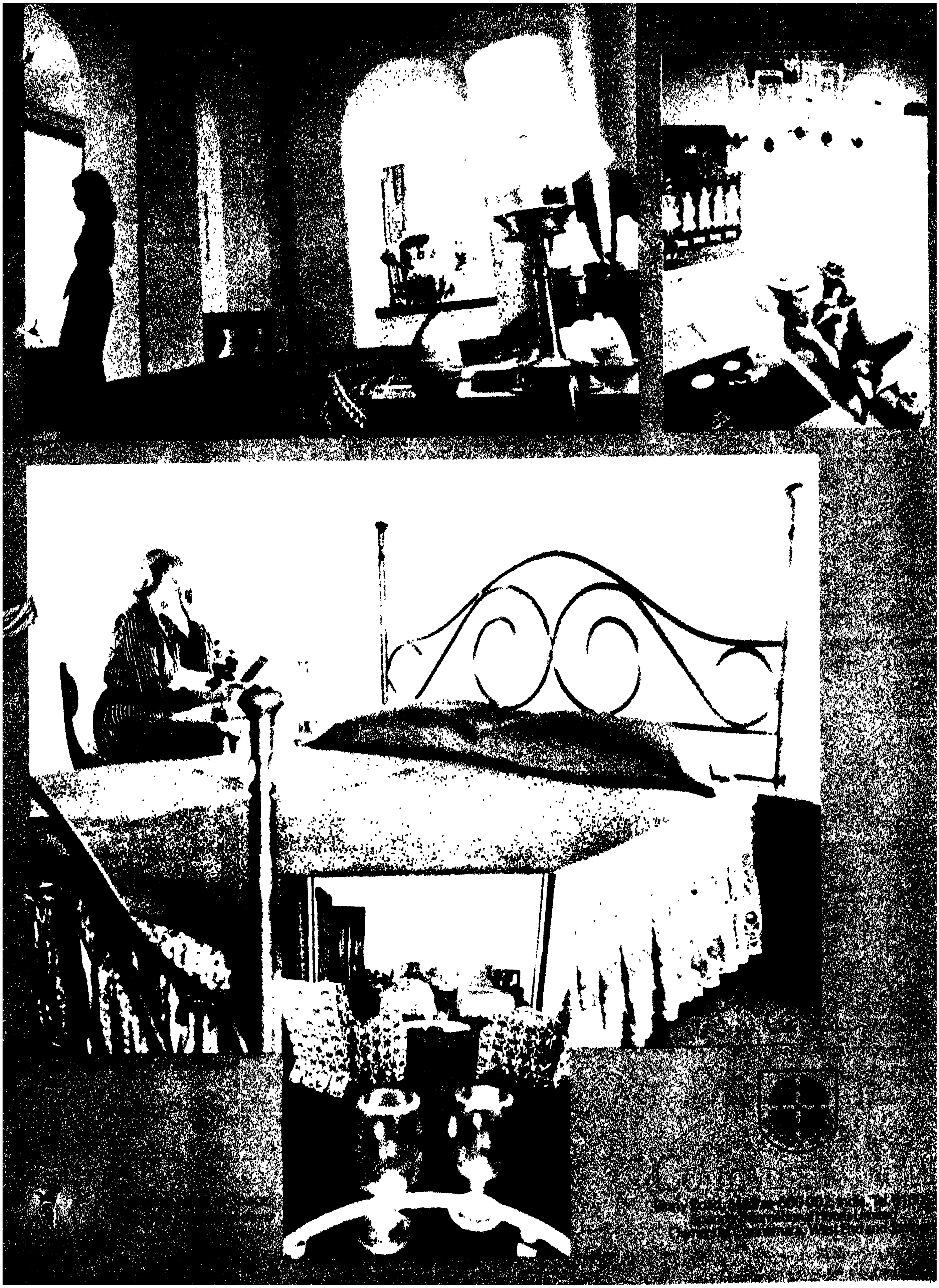

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SUNDAY
VOLUME 8
ISSUE 33
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April 19, 1981

COURTESY 'AAJ'

Phoolan Devi, the terror of UP's ravines, recently escaped a massive police dragnet by the skin of her teeth In this particular encounter, a large part of her gang was killed However, despite having the whole of Jalaun's anti-dacoity forces on her trail, Phoolan Devi is still free. An on-the-spot report by Nirmal Mitra **Page 12**

The script of *Gandhi* is riddled with errors that misrepresent both the character and the role the father of the nation played in our history There are many elementary errors about chronology. Cataloguing all the inaccuracies a historian asks how the government, as part financier of the film, could have passed such a script. **Page 36**

As the new season approaches, soccer fever is building up in Calcutta. With the transfers completed and the broad profiles of the teams known, Sarajit Deb examines the relative prospects of the three big teams—Mohun Bagan, East Bengal and Mohammedan Sporting. **Page 44**

Mrs Urmila Tripathy's joy turned to tragedy when her three-day-old son was stolen from a hospital in Varanasi right before her eyes But Rama Devi's tragedy was different she wanted a child desperately, but could not give birth to one even 12 years after her marriage. Saumitra Banerjee reports on why and how a baby was stolen and how the theives were caught **Page 24**

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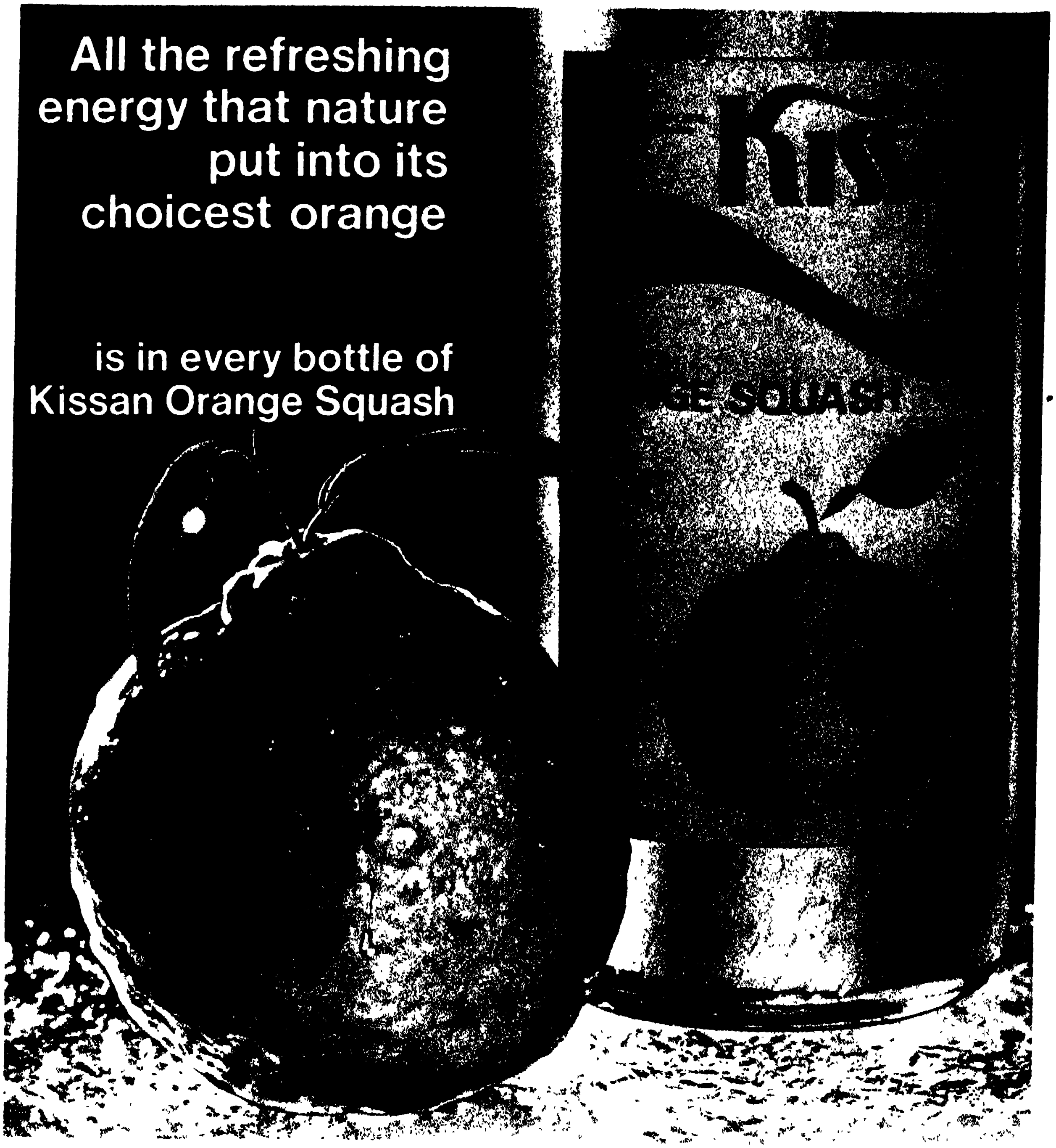

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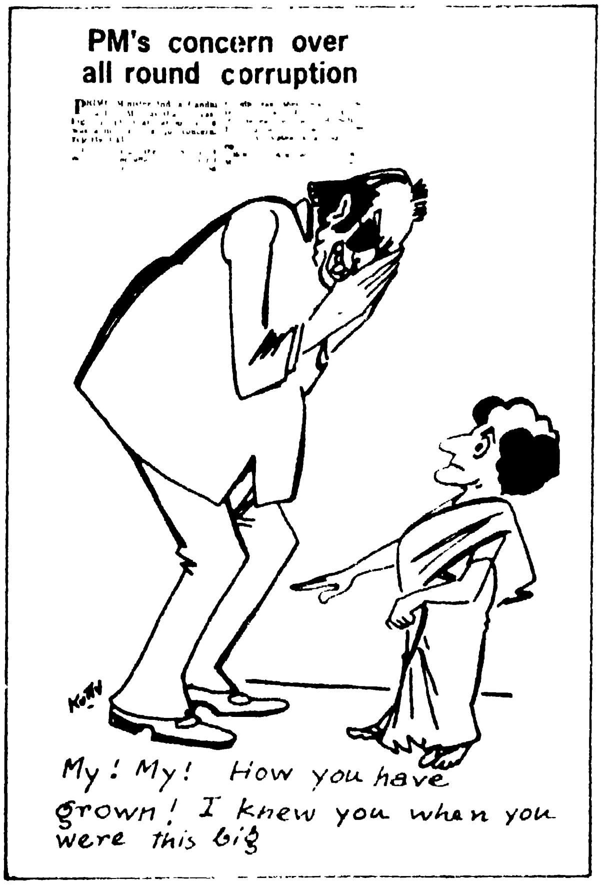
The Government

Self-defeating delay

The government, for good reason, passed the MRTP Act to curb the activities of large industrial houses. Thereafter, for understandable reasons, it decided to make certain relaxations. It needed to increase output quickly so as to tackle inflation and poverty and only large houses could deliver the goods fast enough. But 49 proposals for expansion and starting of new units by large industrial houses have been gathering dust with the department of company affairs even after the industry ministry has cleared them. All that the company affairs department has to do is issue the letters of intent. With double digit inflation, delay means rise in project costs leading to rise in output costs, thus defeating the whole purpose of allowing the new capacity to be set up.

Sixth plan sums go wrong

The basic assumption about savings, on the basis of which the sixth plan has been formulated, seems to have gone awry. This has made officials jittery and they have reacted typically—appointed a committee to go into the matter. Knowing the government, the more serious the problem is, the higher the level of the committee set up. And this problem's seriousness can be gauged from the fact that the government has roped in former Delhi University vice-chancellor and noted economist Dr K. N. Raj, for the review. In order to justify this late look at such basic issues of the plan, it has been announced that Dr Raj's examination of the savings and investment assumptions of the plan will be on the basis of the new 1981 census data. But the exercise might be quite pointless as by the time the review is completed, the plan will have already covered three of its five years.


PM's concern over
all round corruption
My! My! How you have grown! I knew you when you were this big

Six months, down the drain

It has taken the industry ministry six months to issue a press note drawing a distinction between "compulsory" and "voluntary" export obligations. At the first meeting of the cabinet committee on exports (headed by the Prime Minister) on 23 September 1980 it was decided that while regularising excess capacity, the export production of a unit would be considered outside the licensed capacity in terms of the Industries (development and regulation) Act, 1951. This means that a plant's export production will be added to its previous licensed capacity to arrive at the new licensed capacity.

But the press note of the industry ministry announcing this decision was issued only on 21 March and that too after representations from trade and industry. The note says that where an export obligation is one of the conditions for the issue of an industrial licence, the licensee will have to fulfil such obligation and his export production will be counted *within* the licensed capacity. However, where exports are undertaken on a voluntary basis, the amount actually exported will be counted *outside* the licensed capacity.

Loan remains unutilised

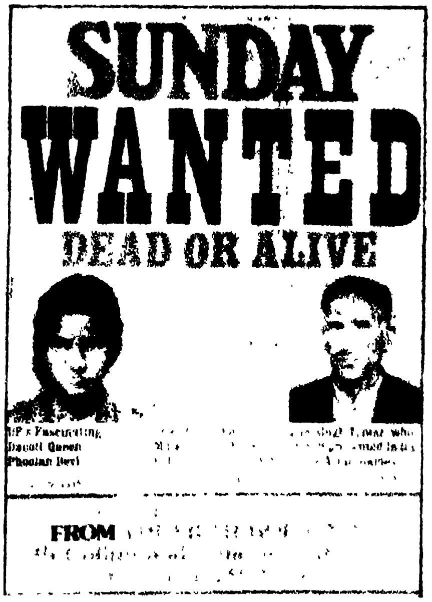
While the Indian government has been approaching the World Bank for more assistance, money already sanctioned is not being promptly used. The petroleum ministry has been sitting idly for over five years on a 5.5-million loan from the IDA (the bank's soft loan affiliate) to modernise fertiliser plants. The bank has expressed its concern at the undue delay by the ministry, but nothing has happened so far.

McNamara's tough talking

World Bank president Robert McNamara was pretty blunt in his discussions with various Indian leaders during his recent visit to Delhi. He also made mincemeat of the various position papers specially prepared for him with great care by the officials of important central ministries like petroleum and chemicals, commerce, industry, finance and planning. But that did not deter the public relations men of these ministries from handing out blatantly wrong information. For example, it was announced that the bank had agreed to finance the onshore oil exploration programme and would closely assist us in realising the sixth plan objectives. Mr McNamara was neither in a position to give such assurances (he will be retiring shortly) nor does the bank have the resources to fulfil them.

State and private capitalism

An important decision taken by the cabinet committee on economic coordination on 20 March was formally notified by the government only on 27 March. The decision was to allow a big hike in the prices of aluminium ingots and wire rods, by over Rs 3,000 a tonne. Why this seven-day delay which caused a good deal of confusion? Aluminium producers were aware of the hike and reluctant to part with stocks at the old rate, leading to an artificial scarcity. The state-owned Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, the canalising agency for aluminium imports, was also reportedly guilty of this. It withheld metal supplies, even to those users to whom it had issued sale notes. State capitalism seems no different from private capitalism



India's Robin Hoods

After going through *Wanted: dead or alive* (15 March) I felt that some people are forced to become, and remain, dacoits by vested interests
Shibnath Ghosh, Bhubaneswar

The fact that some dacoits are popular with the common people reveals one truth: the economic disparities in our country. When the poor get no help from any other quarter, they turn to the dacoits and later join them. All the three written about—Phoolan Devi, Malkhan Singh and Pan Singh Tomar—come from poor families and were humiliated by members of a privileged class.
Bichitra Badajena, Khurda, Orissa

The story reads like a detective novel.
M. Shashidhar, Halady, Karnataka

The dacoits' exploits have been written about in such a way that they seem to be heroes, and this can be socially harmful. Murder and bloodshed over personal grudges should be denounced
Vandana Sinha, Jamshedpur

The story has successfully highlighted the challenge of outlaws to the norms of a civilised order in UP Today's popular films, glorifying crime, encourage such tendencies, and must be strictly censored. It is strange that while an innocent kiss is scrapped, films with gruesome details of mass murder are allowed to be screened.
Hari Hara Mishra, Bolangir, Orissa

After reading your stories, I get the impression that the form of terrorism continuing in Chambal is not a wave of crime but only a volcanic eruption of discontent It emphasises that in a country like ours, justice can rarely be obtained through peaceful means Phoolan Devi, Malkhan Singh and Pan Singh Tomar are not *baghis;* they are symbols of protest against an iniquitous socio-economic and political system
Chhayakanta Nayak, Berhampur, Orissa

When policemen themselves take to crime, is it surprising that the poor become dacoits? It is the rich landlords, policemen and politicians who are responsible for the happenings in Chambal's ravines
V P Thonte, Solapur

We need a thousand Phoolans in every part of India.
Pimak Lahiri, Hasimara, West Bengal

Protesting Catholics

There were some discrepancies in Arthur Pais's *No more Tamil priests* (8 March) The effigy shown is not of Archbishop Arokiaswamy but that of anti-Kannadiga It was not only the Kannada-speaking Catholics who interrupted the singing of Tamil hymns in one of the churches on 28 September 1980; Tamil Catholics are equally to blame for disturbing the Kannada portion of the holy mass No priest, who was to be ordained, was thrown into a ditch by anybody. Instead a moped belonging to a Tamil priest Rev Fr Mari Louise was thrown into a ditch by a group of Tamils who had a personal animosity towards the priest, they shifted the blame for the incident on Kannada Catholics.

We are greatly relieved to read Fr Saleema's apt summary of our agitation He spoke as an impartial judge, though he is the Archbishop's secretary But such fair wisdom and judgment, we are sorry to say, continues to elude the Archbishop, who is turning a blind eye to the writing on the wall, at the cost of the church's image and Christ. Right from the day he took charge at Bangalore, the Archbishop's attitude has been unbecoming of a true Catholic. No Kannada priest has been threatened with excommunication. Though our agitation did find favour with these priests, no one has so far had the guts to take part in it actively along with us. The belief that our agitation is the handiwork of Kannada priests is wrong On the contrary, it is the spontaneous outburst of the entire Kannada laity in the Bangalore archdiocese, whose voices were muffled till now
Jacob Francis, President, Karnataka Catholica Christhara Kannada Sangha, Bangalore

Divine bliss

Our marriage rituals seem to have descended from the original *tantrik* way of life (*The tantrik quest*, 25 January-1 February) In a *tantrik's* life there is a divine purpose for union of *shakti* with *Siva*, or the life force. Yoga is nothing but the union of *shakti* with *Shiva* or *kundalini* with *sahasrara* A *tantrik* does it in divine ecstasy and thus enjoys bliss forever—whereas ordinary human beings do it in ignorance, enjoying bliss only momentarily.
G. B. Nanda, Cuttack

The articles were disappointing because they overemphasised sex.
A. K. Chakraborty, Ranchi

The few lines of *The Chakra* ceremony made nice semi-pornographic reading
Arun Bhatnagar, Rourkela

We are a nation of illiterate, ignorant and superstitious people. Even the educated and literate among us are obsessed with the supernatural.
Jaya Mehta, New Delhi

Samaresh Bose makes no attempt to explain the philosophy of *tantra*, simply because he has not understood it. The feats he watched at *sadhughat* and in the industrial area north of Calcutta are part of *hathayoga*, and have no relation with *tantra*. Also, development of the body is the theme of *hathayoga*, not tantra Beating of drums, singing, dancing and lovemaking by Santhal couples in Birbhum are as much part of Kali *puja* as loudspeakers, fireworks, dancing by hermaphrodites and eveteasing are part of Durga *puja*, Saraswati *puja* or Ganesh *puja*.

The author, if he is really interested in *tantra*, would do well to study the lives of Ramakrishna, Vamakhepa, Nigamananda Paramahansa (and his book *Tantrik Guru*) and Aurobindo He can study *kulanarra tantra, gyanarva tantra and vamakeshwar tantra*. *Tantra* is part of enlightenment through sexual sublimation and not through sexual satisfaction as highlighted by the author
B. S. M. Prasad. Cuttack

In 1936, when I was a schoolboy in the then East Bengal, I witnessed unbelievable acts by *hathayogi* Swami Khagananda. First, from a height of about ten feet, he threw himself into a pot containing broken glass, and remained unhurt. He chewed and ate up a dish; he also chewed gramophone pins and blades; he poured nitric acid on his palm and sipped it like honey. A deep pit was dug into the ground. Swamiji entered it and sat at the bottom for hours. He emerged in sound health. A few years later I learnt of Swami Khagananda's death (from the papers). Apparently, he had died performing one of his *hathayogic* feats.
Biswa Ranjan Ghatak, Calcutta

The articles brought many of your readers in touch with *tantra* for the first time. Other books that throw light on the subject are Promode Chattopadhyaya's *Tantrabilaser Sadhu Sanga* and the writings of Swami Dibyananda. Kamakhya is still a most sought-after centre of *tantrik* practices.
D. K Biswas, Calcutta

Tantra is not all sex, as Mr Bose makes it out to be. It is a sacred cult that leads to self-realisation
D. N. Kashyap, Calcutta

Kundalini, my foot. To glorify sex as the one sure way of realising god is sheer perversion.
K. Narayan, Madras

Cruelty on harijans

Tears rolled down from my eyes as I read *What it means to be a harijan in Gujarat—even for a central minister's daughter* (15 March) and the other interviews with Yogendra Makwana and Mrs Shantabehn Makwana about the caste war in Gujarat. They have explained clearly the plight of untouchables.
R. Sudandiramani, Tiruchy, Tamil Nadu

From my office I went recently to a nearby restaurant with some of my colleagues. I requested the owner of the restaurant to send a cup of tea to my senior clerk, a harijan by caste, at the office The owner turned down my request saying, "I will send a cup of tea for you but not for him because we can't touch his drinking glass " That was when I realised the truth behind Gujarat's caste war.
K Seshagiri Rao, Surada (Orissa)

The policy of reservation is redundant, it is only exploited by those who belong to the rich class of harijans.
P Ravinder, Secunderabad

The reservation issue needs to be closely examined. The fallacy is not so much in the issuing of false scheduled caste/tribe certificates as in the government's policy itself. If a certain person enjoyed the benefits of reservation as far back as in 1950, his grown-up children cannot be considered underprivileged now and rightfully do not deserve any preferential treatment. They cannot expect to reap the harvest for ever.
Harish V., Hyderabad

Such a blatant and senseless reservation policy can only create families like those of Jagjivan Ram and Yogendra Makwana in our country. The term 'harijan' should be scrapped; professional identities are more dignified than caste identities.
M K Mahajan, Coimbatore

Being a harijan myself I was disappointed by Anuradha Makwana's interview; she has failed to spell out the repercussions of the Gujarat agitation. If no solution is found to the reservation issue and if we, the underdogs for centuries, are convinced that nothing can be done, we will embrace another creed.
Sabyasachi Gupta, Patna

Bonds of distrust

Thanks to Subramaniam Swamy for *The bearer bonds are barren* (15 March); he has exposed the worthless proposals contained in "The Special Bearer Bonds Ordinance, 1981 " I also agree with him on the scrapping of the ban on company donations to political parties and the auditing of the latter's accounts
Subir Kumar Lahiri, Calcutta

As an economist, could Mr Swamy provide more details about black money and the "parallel economy" in India? I am particularly keen to know the following:
1 The total volume of black money and the percentage of its supply.
2 Whether the percentage of black money has changed in the last 20 years.
3. The rate of conversion—black to white and vice versa.
4 In calculating GNP, per-capita income, etc , how far is black money taken into account?
5 The reason for black money's higher growth rate than white money's
6 Whether black money in India has foreign connections.
7. The names of industries operating in the "parallel economy."
8 The banking system of black money.
9. Whether it is possible, even theoretically, to eliminate this "parallel economy."

Ashish K. Ghosh, Calcutta

If "black money (is) being generated at a rate of Rs 20,000 crores annually," then our economy would have collapsed by now.
Anand R. Deshpande, Solapur

Harmony from the books

Before independence, a number of Bengalis, like Gopalkrishna Dey, Padmanath Bhattacharjee Bidyabinode, Harakishor Choudhury Bhaktibinod and Baikunthabehari Roy, made a significant contribution to the Assamese language and literature; and since then, there have been more Bengali literateurs, like Dr Jogiraj Bose, Hemanya Biswas and Dr Amalendu Guha, who have written in Assamese Their works should be included in the curricula of all schools and universities in Assam and, at the same time, the state government should ensure that all such textbooks which preach hate and enmity are withdrawn without delay.
Bholanath Chakraborty, London

Black bond

The interview with R. K. Karanjia (*"The bond will benefit black money holders,"* 1 March) shows that the government of India has joined the criminal, tax-evading and blackmarketing fraternity in its war on the nation's economy; the real motive behind issuing the bonds was to benefit black money holders in high politicial positions.
R. M. Agarwala, Bhilai

Our erudite politicians work most diligently to make the millions they will need after they are thrown out of power.
Prabhakar S. Harsole, Indore

One cannot understand the Karanjia brand of journalism; he was very much a supporter of Mrs Gandhi till March 1977. He did not raise a finger to protest against the Voluntary Disclosure Scheme. He was silent when the Janata demonetised the "black" thousand-rupee notes. Now he goes hammer and tongs against black bonds.
Rajan Vergis, Hyderabad

Morals intact

[illegible] she could not [illegible] her cultural tour of [illegible] extended beyond [illegible] the festival till [illegible] January [illegible] returned to Madras. My wife [illegible] Delhi on 11 January and [illegible] me there, flew straight to Madras as well.
C. S. Rao, Madras

Beastly men

The two pictures of Mrs Rama (*Stop this barbarity against women!* 15 March) serve as a reminder of how cruel men can be.
Ashok Kumar, Puri

Well deserved

Regardless of whether I am pro-American or pro-Russian, as a true Indian I feel that our self-styled intellectuals deserve to be treated as reported in *Americans snub 'intellectuals'* (15 March). It is hardly the duty of Rajini Patels, Karanjias and Sardesais to advise the leader of any foreign government on policy matters, they have no business to fear the appointments of Alexander Haig as US secretary of state and Caspar Weinberger as US defence secretary. Even a school student today knows that it is the Russians who are playing havoc in Asia and Africa. Our 'intellectuals' are best advised against dancing to the tune of super powers; they should concentrate on Indian problems.
C. P. Rajendran, New Delhi

Objection

Achal Mehra in *Sikhs pay for mistaken identity* (15 March) describes Indian Sikhs as being "shackled by religious taboos that prevent them from shaving their beards and snipping off their hair.. " I would like to point out that there is no difference between Indian Sikhs and other Sikhs; all Sikhs follow their ten Gurus and hold the Guru Granth Sahib in reverence They have a distinct identity and it is highly irresponsible and derogatory of Mr Mehra to pass judgment on their faith. It hurts the feelings of a minority community.
Gurucharan Singh, Calcutta

Last letter

They have legalised abortion as 'medical termination of pregnancy' and now black money as 'bearer bond.'
B. Banerjee, Ranchi

Rs 50 for the last letter

THE HUNT FOR PHOOLAN DEVI

On the afternoon of 31 March, when on an informer's tip-off the police surrounded Gulauli village in UP's Jalaun district, they thought they would finally get the dacoit queen Phoolan Devi; but she slipped away. Nirmal Mitra visited Gulauli to report on the massive hunt, and the encounter in which most of Phoolan's gang was wiped out.

COURTESY AJ

COURTESY AJ

COURTESY AJ

◀ *Phoolan's men who were killed by the police: (top to bottom)* ***Ram Shankar, Laltu and Prahlad Yadav***

Phoolan Devi, the dacoit queen, is a desperate woman today, running for her life. The whole police force of Uttar Pradesh seems to be after her; she is everyone's prize catch More than half of her small gang has already been wiped out in one encounter with the police after another during this war that the police have launched on dacoits after the bloody revenge that Phoolan Devi took on the Behmai *thakurs* (see *Sunday* 15 March) who had once insulted and humiliated her Other important dacoit leaders are angry with her; by this one outrage, she has invited a massive hunt for all of them. And one of her former associates, Baba Mustaqim some of whose men aided her in the Behmai attack, has already lost his life from a police bullet

All that Phoolan Devi has left are a couple of followers, her weapons, the goodwill of her backward supporters in the villagers--and the guts and will to escape, fight and continue to spit at authority. She has, in the past weeks, escaped in miraculous ways from one police dragnet after another. (Things reached such a pass that there was great commotion in Lucknow when someone announced on 1 April that Phoolan Devi had been arrested and was being brought to UP's capital by helicopter; it was later discovered to be an April Fool's joke. Even the news agencies had been taken in by this prank.)

The manner in which Phoolan Devi escaped from the police on 31 March makes an absolutely fascinating story, typical of all that has come to be associated with dacoits—violence, wit, presence of mind, and that important ingredient, a sense of honour. It seems straight out of a Bombay film.

Baba Mustaqim (he was a Muslim) was killed on 4 March near Akbarpur by the police. It is a principle among dacoits to honour those who have lost their lives in the dacoit tradition: readers would recall the dangers Pan Singh Tomar invited to honour the spirit of his dead brother. In Baba Mustaqim's village, Gulauli, in the Yamuna ravines, his relatives were in mourning—the Muslim period of mourning continues for 40 days. Honour demanded that Phoolan Devi visit Baba Mustaqim's house, and everyone knew that—including the police. The village of Gulauli and the nearby Sirauli, under the Kalpi police station, were certainly under surveillance, of both the police and their informers.

Phoolan's gang were not in one place; it was a normal precaution. One group of three was in Sirauli, another three were living in a house in Gulauli. The two leaders and lovers, Phoolan and Man Singh Yadav, were in the region, but nobody managed till the end to find out exactly where. Also present was a member of Malkhan Singh's gang—come to negotiate perhaps, or perhaps to betray Phoolan, or perhaps to kill her on Malkhan's orders since she was the cause of their harassment; there are many theories floating around, and you are welcome to choose whichever impresses you best. (It is true, however, that the other gangs of the region, in Kanpur and Jalaun, are angry with Phoolan and not at all keen to help her survive; they feel that if the police can catch her then the heat on them will lessen, as the police will be satisfied with their prize catch.)

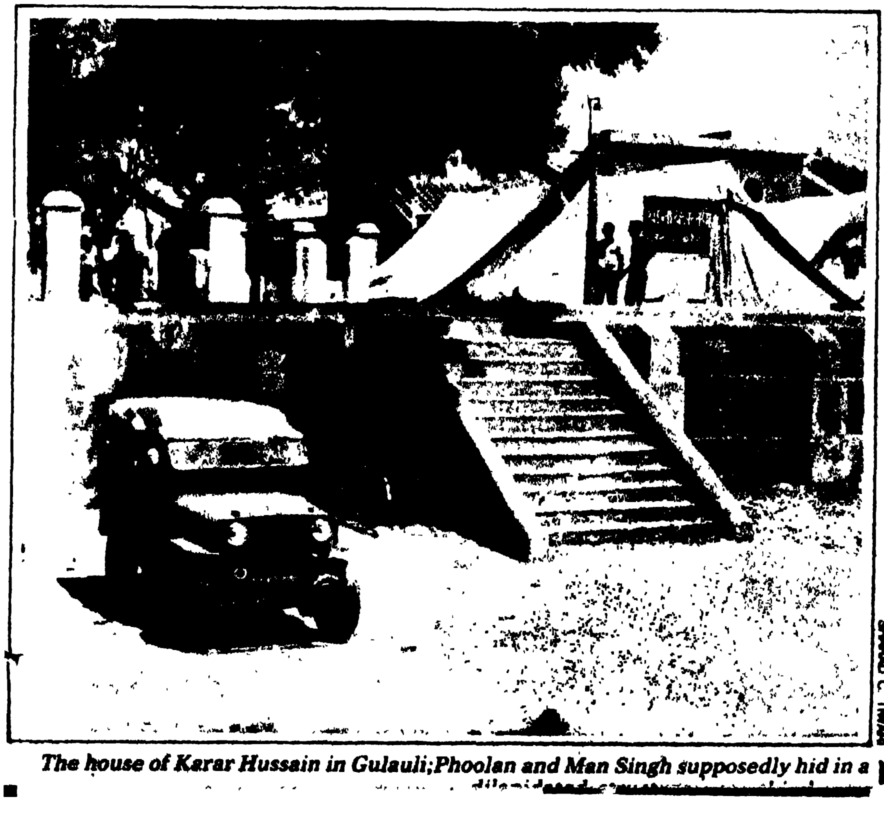
On 31 March, Dhruv Lal Yadav, station officer at the Kalpi police station, received word from a police informer that IR40 was in the vicinity. IR40 (inter-range 40) was the codename for Phoolan's gang; the information was quite specific too. The police knew that the gang could be found, if they moved immediately, at Sirauli and Gulauli. Yadav took a party of 15 policemen, armed with LMGs, rifles and handgrenades, and moved into Sirauli. They reached by noon, and, acting on the informer's directions, went towards the house of a person called Matadeen (he was the brother of Ram Shankar, one of Phoolan's associates.) The house was cordoned, and the police moved in. They accounted for Sobaran Singh (the visitor from Malkhan Singh's gang, and a *dhobi* called Laltu who was also hiding inside) and Ram Shankar, who too was there.

The police were a little surprised to see Laltu with the dacoits; they recognised him as the washerman who had worked for the policemen themselves till not very long ago. "He must have been insulted by someone somewhere," sub-inspector Yadav said about Laltu. "If you abuse them, this is what they do. They pretend to accept the abuse, and say, 'all right *sahab*,' but the next time you see them they are in the ravines." The police recovered a US-made Winchester rifle from Sobaran Singh, a .315 rifle from Laltu and an Indian-made SBBL rifle from Ram Shankar.

This was only the beginning of the operation; the informer had promised a far bigger catch than just this. A wireless message had been sent to the SP, Jalaun, Mr Uma Shankar Bajpai, and he reached with additional, special anti-dacoity forces, more than 250 in number. Now the police began the real search for Phoolan Devi, Man Singh and their gang. They were particularly interested in a man called Bora and his house.

Gulauli is a very large village; its population is around 11,000. And 90 per cent of the people are Muslims. There are a handful of backward caste Hindu families (like *yadavs* and *lohars*), but there are hardly any *mallahs*, the caste to which Phoolan Devi belongs. This is the village which created Mustaqim, who once was in Malkhan Singh's gang and then later broke away to form his own powerful group. Mustaqim was a father-figure not only to the villagers but also to all

The Kalpi police station



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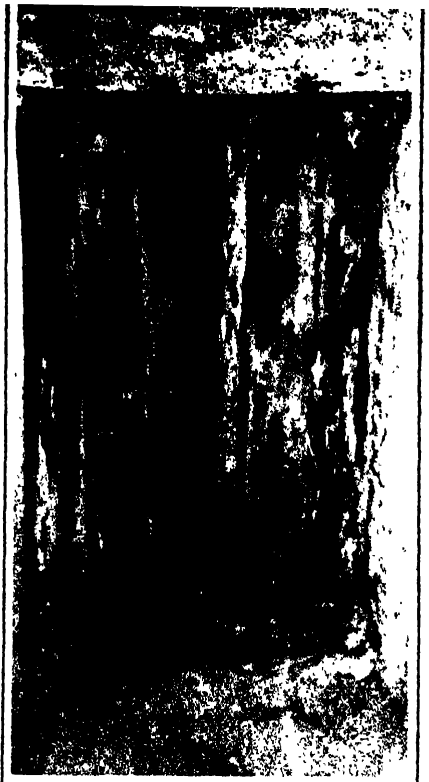


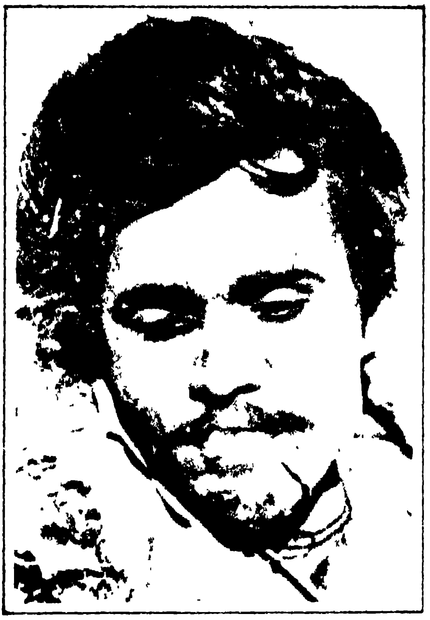
The door to the room where three of Phoolan's men were hiding

The pig sty where Baladin hid

The house of Karar Hussain in Gulauli; Phoolan and Man Singh supposedly hid in a the dacoit gangs operating in the Jalaun and Kanpur districts, and he was respectfully and affectionately known as "Baba." He was quite devout, actually, in his religious faith, and the only vice he was known to commit was of course the well-known one of dacoity. But once again the Robin Hood syndrome appears; he was quite generous to the poor. He was a bit of a moralist, and often used to chide Phoolan Devi for her "promiscuity." Mustaqim's authority made Gulauli a "protected" village; no dacoit, big or small, attacked this village, either out of respect or out of fear. And the villagers too helped the dacoits, giving them shelter—relatively easy in a village as large as this one. Only once was Gulauli attacked—by a dacoit called Shiv Narain who had fallen out with Mustaqim and wanted to take revenge, and that was about four years ago.

But on 31 March, the traditional scouts that always keep an eye out for danger whenever a dacoit gang rests at any place were either just not there, or were taking it easy. This was surprising, and Phoolan Devi and her gang were to pay a very heavy price for this.

The police reached Gulauli at around four in the afternoon, and surrounded the village. All the villagers were ordered to come out, in single file, to vacate their houses and wait outside in the open. Each woman was examined individually for any traces of resemblance to Phoolan Devi: the police did not have an accurate idea of what she looked like, since no one has a photograph, but they had a vague idea. They were trying to prevent Phoolan Devi from escaping under a disguise.


COURTESY AAJ

Sobaran Singh

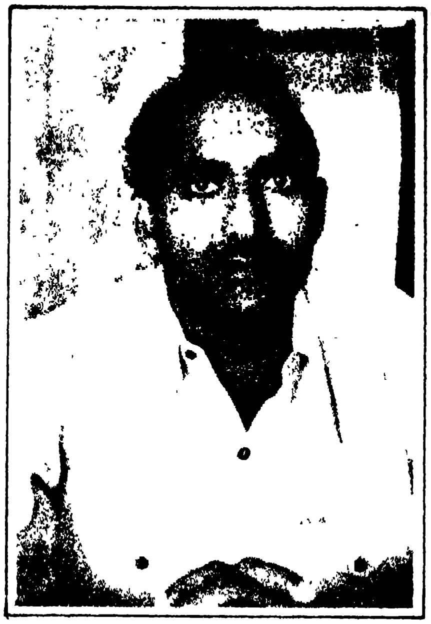
The ruins of Mustaqim's house in Gulauli

The ruins of Mustaqim's brother, Muslim's house in Gulauli

SHARAD C TIWARI

The police finally reached one house they were looking for, the house of Nyamat Bora, and they, guns ready, surrounded it. The police information had been accurate. Inside were three members of Phoolan Devi's gang, Prahlad Yadav, Baladin and Prem Singh. The three had tried a last desperate ruse, and got someone to lock them up from outside so that an impression might be created that there was no one in the house. But the police shot open the locks, and calmly waited for the dacoits to come out. They did not. So the SP Mr Bajpai climbed onto the mud roof, and broke through the roof to take the dacoits by surprise. The dacoits finally opened up with their guns, and in the exchange, Prahlad Yadav and Prem Singh died on the spot. Four policemen, sub-inspector Ramayan Singh, sub-inspector Surendra Pal Singh, sub-inspector Ram Bharose and constable Ranjit Singh, were injured (the police recovered two single barrel rifles later).

But Baladin was unhurt, and he came out, his arms high in the air in a gesture of surrender. Surrendering dacoits do not often get a chance to survive during an encounter, but, in any case, this time the police wanted some informtion. Mr Bajpai asked him the question: where was Phoolan Devi? Baladin replied: "She was here till eleven in the morning, but I do not know in which house." The police were relaxed after the tension of the gun battle; Baladin was obviously unarmed, and they began discussing what to do next, how to try and catch Phoolan Devi herself. Suddenly, when no one was looking, Baladin, in one swift movement, jumped out of the courtyard, ran out of the house and disappeared. One constable vainly sent a burst of LMG fire in the vague direction of a fleeing Baladin, but he had escaped.



SHARAD C. TIWARI

Sub-inspector Dhruv Lal Yadav

The police now concentrated on trying to capture Phoolan Devi and Man Singh Yadav. That both of them were there was confirmed to this reporter by the villagers themselves, and at least one police officer. But try as they might the police could not find them. Many villagers knew where they were hiding, but no one uttered a word of betrayal. They were in fact hiding in a dilapidated hut near the house of a person called Karar Hussain. A group of boys in this village told this reporter that Phoolan had managed to escape special attention by changing her dress. She first changed (from her normal police uniform) into a *salwar kameez* and then a *sari*. She emerged from hiding only after the police had left, on the next day (1 April), and when she came out she was back in her police uniform, a gun in hand—and her lover Man Singh by her side.

And how had Baladin managed to escape, despite the fact that there was a police cordon around the village, and even if he had managed to dodge the police at the place of the encounter, how had he got around the police surrounding the village? Baladin simply hid himself in a pig sty. He too only came out the next morning. The police just did not think anyone would hide there. The villagers had to spend the whole of that night out of their homes, because the police search in every house did not end till nine o'clock the next morning, on 1 April, but no one squealed. One side-effect of this police operation was that the whole area had a milk crisis on 1 April: Gulauli is the major source of milk for Kalpi *tehsil*.

Phoolan's most serious problem, while escaping the police, is her caste. Being a backward Hindu, a *mallah*, and particularly, one who has challenged the upper castes in such a violent manner. The attack on the *thakurs* of Behmai meant much more than a simple butchery of people; it was a challenge to the machismo of the *thakur* clan. Phoolan cannot seek hospitality or help from anyone except, by and large, her own caste, the *mallahs* living in the ravines of the Yamuna, Betwa and Pahounch, between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. (The largest concentration of *mallahs* is in the Kuthaun police station region.)

The *mallahs* are generaly poor, but not completely poverty-stricken. They are boatmen who eke out a living by ferrying people across the Yamuna. They live in villages near the river; they do not own much land, and their agriculture largely consists of growing eatables like pumkins along the river banks. Phoolan Devi of course knows this region well.

The massive police hunt launched against the dacoit gangs in both UP and MP is having its effect, apparently. According to Mr B. P. Singhal, DIG, anti-dacoity operations, UP, the police have already accounted for the bulk of the dacoits who were involved in the Behmai massacre, barring the leaders— Phoolan, Ram Avtar and Balwan Garadia. Behmai was the scene of Phoolan's revenge, particularly against two *thakurs* called Lalaram and Sriram. She went to the village and asked the villagers to hand these two over, but nobody would tell her where they were (they were in nearby Dastampur). In a rage, she ordered a massacre with the cry "*Jai Kali Mai*" on her lips. She herself killed a few men; the rest were killed by others.

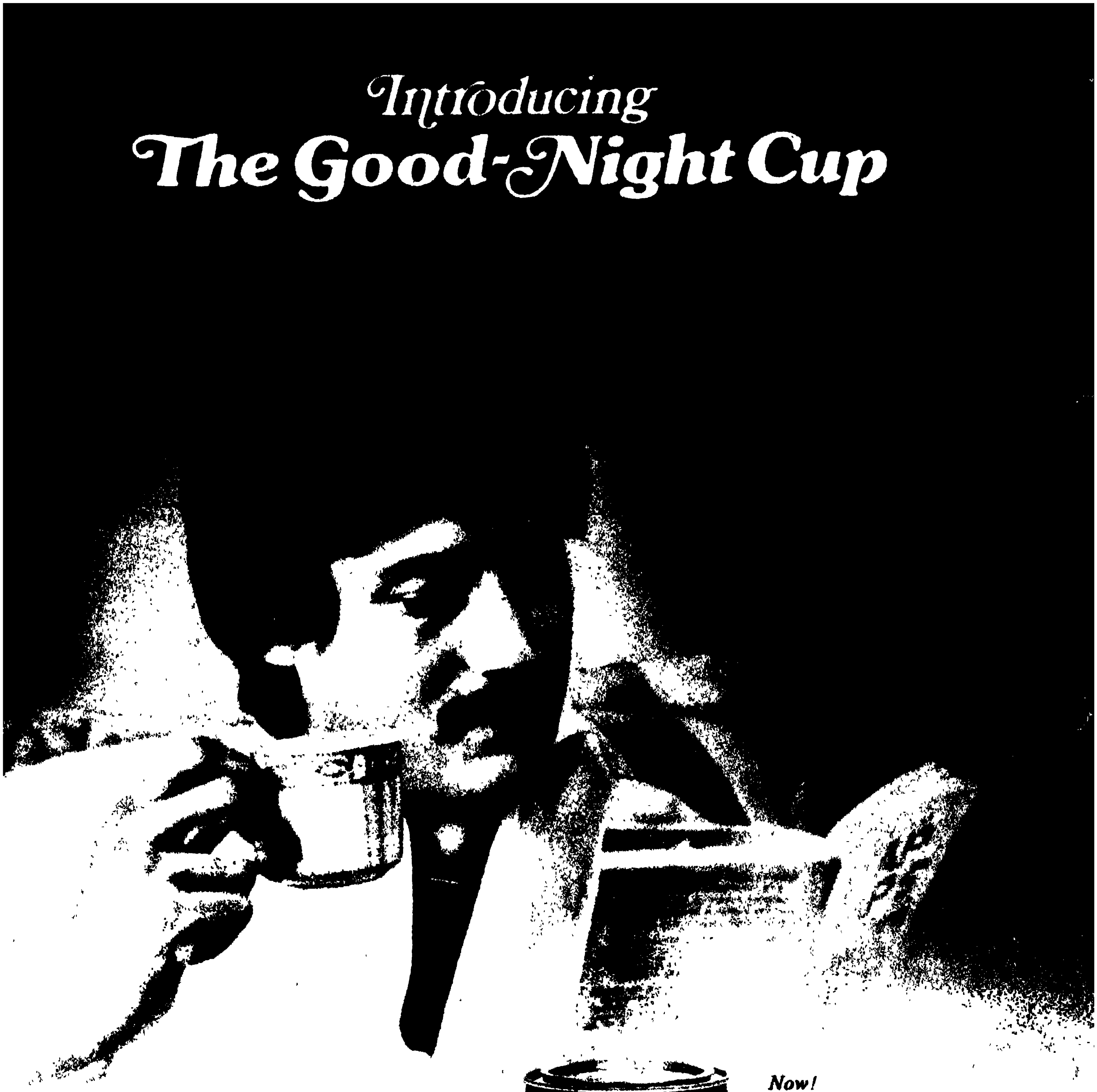
The massacre created a sensation; *thakur* chief minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh got together with his relative, chief minister Arjun Singh of

Press versus police

More than policemen, it is journalists who are on the trail of Phoolan Devi. But the enthusiasm has already caused problems in Kanpur: it has brought the police and press to loggerheads over the question of what should be, and should not be, written.

When Vikram Mallah died in August 1980, the police claimed to have killed him in an encounter. *Aaj's* Manoj Pande and Arun Agarwal went to Baijamau village the day Vikram Mallah was killed, and gathered from local residents that only two shots had been fired, and the police did not kill Vikram. An enquiry was started. Later, after the Behmai killings, the police testified that Lalaram and Sriram Singh had, in fact, killed Vikram and captured Phoolan, thus contradicting their earlier statement. When Baba Mustaqim was killed, the police held that he was killed in an encounter. When *Aaj's* Vinod Shukla, Dilip Shukla, Manoj Pande and *Ravivar's* Santosh Bhartiya visited the spot, they learnt that it was the villagers who had, in the last analysis, got Mustaqim caught. In fact, the police did not know who the man they had caught was. The DIG, Kanpur, V. K. Jain, began pressurising the press to publish version. Inspectors Surendra Pal Sharma, Babu Purwa and O. P. Mishra of Kanpur Kotwali police station came to the *Aaj* office in Bansmandi, Kanpur, and sat there the whole night to see what was going to be published the next day. *Aaj* brought out the villagers' version. The DIG, Mr Jain, complained about this to the paper's managing editor, S. V. Gupta.

The police were also irritated by *Aaj's* account of the Churkhi incident. The day after three policemen were butchered in the village by Lalaram and Sriram Singh, reporters Shailendra Dixit, Manoj Pande, Amar Singh and photographer Dinesh Sharma went to Churkhi and got to know that the dacoits had pulled one of the sub inspectors inside the room they were hiding in and, with a hatchet, had cut his neck and cut off his testicles, and burnt them. This was confirmed by the villagers, and later, the PAC men. When the story appeared in *Aaj* the next day, the SP, Jalaun, Uma Shankar Bajpai, reacted angrily. At a ceremony to mourn the death of the policemen in police lines, Jalaun, in the presence of home minister Rajendra Tripathi, the IG, DIG and other high-ranking officials, Mr Bajpai took the paper from *Aaj's* Orai correspondent, Harnarayan Gupta, read through the item and said: *"Yeh sale akhbarwale sab jhooth likhte"* (These bloody newsmen write lies). Mr Bajpai,tore up the newspaper. At this, the deputy SP, I. D. Chandra, remarked "*Saab, ham yeh kyon nahin kehte ki dakait presswalle ko finance karte hain?*" (Sir, why don't we say that the press is financed by dacoits?) Mr Gupta and the district journalists union president R. S Datre protested that the officers were insulting the press. Bajpai replied: "You do not know what I can do. I can arrest you under the NSA." The two journalists walked out. Soon afterwards, Bajpai also walked out of the room and apologised to the pressmen. Two Lok Dal MLAs, Shankar Singh and Dalganjan Singh, raised this matter in the Assembly. The home minister said: "The SP has requested me to check *Aaj's* ways." The opposition protested loudly: "The government censors the press. Now will the house also be censored?" All the government did was to defend the police. The SP, Jalaun, did ask for the home secretary's permission to start legal proceedings against *Aaj* regarding the controversial report but the home secretary refused.



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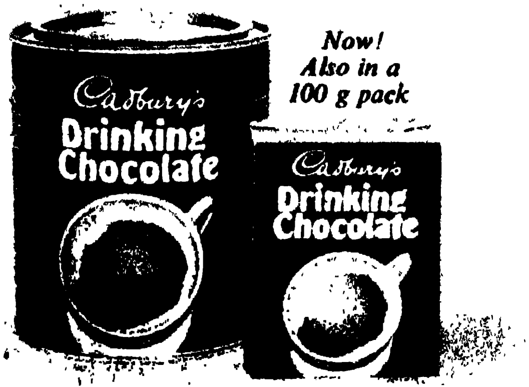

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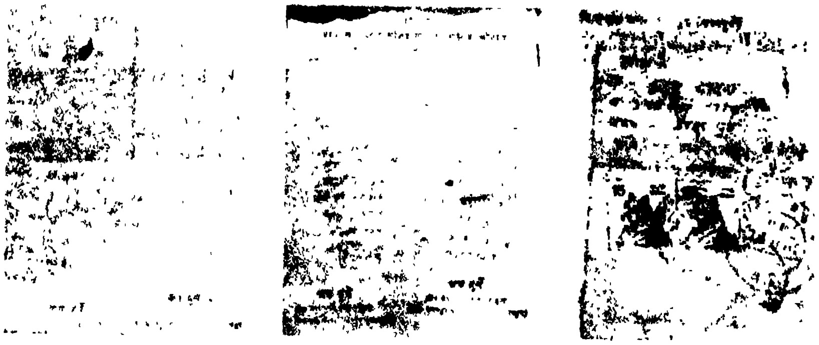
The gangsters


SHARAD C TIWARI

A letter (left) from Deo Narayan Tewari of Orai to his son, after he was kidnapped by Sriram and Lalaram Singh, asking for a ransom of Rs one lakh. On the other side of the letter (second from left) is a threat from Lalaram and Sriram: "If you do not act within a week, you will find your father's dead body on the road between Kalpi and Orai." More than dacoity, kidnapping is a popular crime among UP's gangsters.

There are nine listed dacoit gangs operating in the ravines: one of 25 to 30 men led by Ghanshyam (who is a *khangar*, a backward caste considered marginally superior to *mallahs*) operating in Jalaun, a part of Madhya Pradesh, and Etawah. The second, about 10 to 15 strong, is led by a *thakur*, Munna Dabar, and operates in MP and Jalaun. The third, around a dozen men, consisting of followers of Baba Mustaqim, operates in Jalaun. The fourth, seven to eight strong, led by two *thakurs* Lalaram and Sriram Singh, of Behmai fame, operates in Kanpur and Jalaun (of whom four have surrendered). The fifth, five to seven strong, is led by Ram Avtar, a *mallah*, and its area is Etawah, Kanpur and Jalaun (this gang, codenamed IS36 in police files, was a part of the one led by Vikram Mallah, who was killed by Lalaram and Sriram). The sixth, about eight strong, is led by Raghunath, a *mallah*, and lives off Kanpur, Jalaun and Hamirpur. The seventh, about five to six strong, is led by Vijay Chhetrapal, a *thakur*, and operates in Jalaun and Etawah. The eighth, about 10 to 12 strong, is led by Santosh Pandit, a *brahmin* (who, incidentally, is a B.A. and B.Ed!), and operates in a part of MP and Jalaun (this group is a breakaway from the Ghanshyam gang). The ninth, of course, is now a gang of three led by Phoolan Devi and Man Singh, a *mallah* and a *yadav*, respectively.

There was no organised gang in Kanpur district before the one led by Vikram Mallah (who was killed at the age of 27). There were small gangs here and there. But slowly the small-time criminals were wiped out. Vikram Mallah started an organised gang in August 1980, and it is from this group that many other gangs operating today emerged. Phoolan Devi joined him, to avenge the humiliation and oppression she suffered at the hands of *thakurs* in her village Shekhpur Gora. Vikram Mallah was a victim of gang rivalry; he was killed by Lalaram and Sriram Singh.

After Vikram Mallah was shot dead, Phoolan is said to have met Mustaqim to ask for a place in his ranks. First he refused to have her, but later allowed her to accompany his men. Phoolan managed to win the favour of a member of Mustaqim's gang, Man Singh Yadav, and the two left to form their own gang. Phoolan and Man Singh also came to an agreement with Ram Avtar Mallah, Raghunath Mallah and Balwan Garadia, to work together, while maintaining their separate identities. Eventually, all these gangs came under the common leadership of Mustaqim. Whenever they went out on a mission, they raised the slogan "*Baba Mustaqim ki jai.*" In all, they were about 40 men and women; their common enemies were the *thakurs*, especially Lalaram and Sriram.

Mustaqim, who was opposed to murder, disapproved of the Behmai killings. But Phoolan was determined to get her bloody revenge. The result was a parting of ways between Phoolan and Mustaqim. Mustaqim never approved of unnecessary killings, especially mass killings. For instance, when Balwan Garadia's sister was raped by a police officer, and Balwan screamed for revenge, Mustaqim ensured that only the officer got killed, and nobody else.

Since February, there have been a series of encounters in which both the police and gangsters have suffered serious losses. On 24 February, at about 12 noon, Balwan's gang was traced in Behta village. (The price on Balwan's head was Rs 2,000.) In the gang was also a woman, Meera Thakur. An exchange of fire followed between the police and the gangsters, after which they were chased over 35 kms to Betwa river, which meets the Yamuna at Hamirpur. Some of the dacoits tried to disguise themselves as labourers at a brick kiln, while three of them took up positions, and waited for the policemen. In the firing that followed, inspector Moolchand, SO, Bhognipur police station was hit in the leg and fell. Another officer with him, sub-inspector Udenia managed to escape injury. Meanwhile, a PAC party approached the area from another direction. They spotted the two policemen, and, mistaking them for bandits, readied to open fire on them. Inspector Moolchand and Udenia threw up their hands and shouted that they were policemen, not gangsters. But the PAC thought this to be a trick, and opened fire. Moolchand fell. Soon, one of the dacoits pounced on him from behind, grabbed his rifle and killed the officer. The PAC men, realising their mistake, attacked the dacoits with grenades and killed six of them, including Balwan Garadia himself (who was in an SP's uniform).

On 27 March, a police party consisting of one station officer, one sub-inspector and five constables, on receiving information that a dacoity was about to take place, went to Seme village at 3 pm. When they reached the place, they heard that Lalaram and Sriram were there. Not sure which house the dacoits were in, the policemen started a search.

When they reached the house of one Banwari Lal Kutil, and opened the door, Lalaram and Sriram, who were hiding inside, opened fire. Sub inspector Bhure Lal was hit, and fell dead. SO Kali Ram and constable Indrajit Singh were also shot dead. The dacoits then escaped with two rifles and 50 cartridges taken from the dead policemen.

The intensification of police activity has not really affected the crime rate. Even after the Behmai killings, until 1 April, there have been three cases of kidnapping by dacoits. On 9 March Gyan Singh was kidnapped from the Ata police station area by the Amar Singh gang of MP; in the third week of March, a wholesale *bidi* dealer, Shyam Sundar Purwar, was kidnapped by a gang led by Raju Bhatnagar from the Orai police station area; and in the last week of March, Chaturvedi was kidnapped by the Vijay Singh gang from the Kuthaun police station area.

Madhya Pradesh and promised that dacoity would be stopped. Except for just one person, the rest of Ram Avtar's gang has been liquidated over the last month. And the other gangs are jittery, and blame Phoolan for this unwanted attention from the police. Even Raghunath Mallah, who belongs to the same caste as Phoolan, is not willing to help her. Mustaqim has been killed, and nine of his gang members have joined Malkhan's group. The main target of the police currently, is Phoolan.

Gulauli was the second close shave Phoolan Devi had. The first was a chance encounter SI Dhruv Lal Yadav and his men had with her on the very day of the Behmai killings. Mr Yadav bit and clicked his tongue in regret as he recounted how he had missed Phoolan. Early in the morning on 15 February 1981, the day after the Behmai incident, Yadav and his men were patrolling the ravines near Mukdalan, near Phoolan's village. Yadav said, "I am sure the gang had got to know that there were some men in the vicinity, and they suspected we were Lalaram and Sriram's gang not policemen. We had left deep footprints in the earth, and hence an easy trail. At about 2 am at night we heard a voice from nearby, *kaun hai?* (who is there?) The voice could not have been more than 25 yards away. I had seen Ram Avtar when he had come to jail once. I had seen him for about 24 hours. I immediately recognised his voice. We crouched and crawled on our hands and knees. Then I heard Avtar loading his gun. One of the constables with us then made the sad mistake of panicking: he let off a wild burst on his LMG. This scared off the gangsters and gave away our identity as policemen. If we could somehow have made them believe that we were not policemen, they would have fallen into the trap and tried to attack us. I was unlucky—I always am, when it comes to getting Phoolan Devi. See how Baladin ran away."

There is a bank officer in Orai, one of whose relatives was once kidnapped by the Phoolan gang. He provided some interesting details about Phoolan. She is extremely clever. She never stops for the night in any village; she loves peanuts; she is a fine marksman and runs "like a deer." The kidnapped man was taken to the jungles, and treated well (he was given six *chappatis* a day to eat) but was under constant guard. Every hour the guard was replaced by another man. While the rest of the gang slept with the hostage, Phoolan and her lover Man Singh slept together, separate from the others. According to the person kidnapped, Phoolan is not as crude as most people imagine. She does manage to dominate over Man Singh (like many other women over their lovers/husbands). Phoolan Devi has a wheatish complexion, a longish face, bobbed hair, but is not very healthy. Two things she is fond of: tying red ribbons as a headband and wristband, and black clothes.

SHARAD C TIWARI

The bridge over the Yamuna; Phoolan is understood to have crossed it on foot four days before the Gulauli shootout

Although the anti-dacoity operations intensified after the Behmai killings (Behmai is now considered the transition point in police activities; the new DIG anti-dacoity operations B. P. Singhal, has set up his headquarters at the Kalpi government guest house, from where he is keeping a round-the-clock vigil), Phoolan's truncated gang is still proving too clever for them. And this is not because of the respective weapons the two sides use, Mr Singhal says: "Basically the fight against dacoits is dependent on two factors. cultivating information about the gangs and the force quantum. But the strength of the force etc is only of secondary importance. We have enough men and firepower. What we need is powerful binoculars and the use of helicopters· binoculars also help in identifying our own forces so that we do not shoot at them by mistake." The gangsters know these weaknesses too well themselves; that is why most of them dress in police uniform.

For instance, during the encounter against Balwan's gang on 24 February, the SP's force was on the western and eastern side of the target. It could not be informed about the approach of another police party from another direction, and the SP's men got a burst of LMG fire from the other policemen. "Binoculars could have come in handy in that situation. True, the dacoits were also in uniform, but their uniforms are shabbier from days of wear and tear." As for the helicopter, Mr Singhal says, it has proved to be useful in two big ways: to locate the position of dacoits quickly; and airdrop policemen.

In the enthusiasm currently visible, a helicopter has been sanctioned for anti-dacoity operations, but it is as good as useless. It is stationed in Lucknow, and even in an emergency it cannot be put into use immediately. The problem here, according to Mr Singhal, is the civil aviation regulations governing the use of the helicopters. According to these it must land and take off at specified helipads. Obviously, in anti-dacoity operations these rules cannot be followed. In fact, after the helicopter was used in violation of civil aviation rules in an encounter at Churkhi, the pilot, Shekhar Singh, was grounded.

After the Behmai killings, the government asked the police to specify its needs. The state IG, home secretary, chief secretary and finance secretary are understood to be considering a proposal to appoint an additional SP in the dacoity-prone areas. As long ago as 1960 a recommendation had been made for self-loading rifles, motorboats, jeeps etc. But nothing materialised. It was only after Behmai that the police have been supplied SLRs.

Prices on heads do not help either, says Mr Singhal. Before the Behmai killings, the price on Phoolan's head was Rs 1,000. After the incident, it shot up to Rs 10,000. "I am against such rewards. They only encourage dacoity; it becomes a dacoit's ambition to boast of a price on his or her head. I suggest making a flat reward of Rs 500 for the arrest of every leading outlaw."

Another problem the police face is during an actual encounter. The local population are invariably sympathetic to the outlaws, and help them with information. Also "fighting dacoits is worse than fighting a guerrilla war, where you can fire indiscriminately. Here you have to account for every bullet and firearm, and be careful not to kill innocents," Mr Singhal pointed out.

Mr Singhal had an extraordinary suggestion to solve the dacoit menace: enacting a law that would enable the police to arrest close relatives of the wanted men and women. (Incidentally he himself is happy that the dacoits have never tried carrying on vendettas against policemen's families. "Thankfully, they know too well this will not help. If you kill a policmen another will take his place," Mr Singhal said). "After all, how much of the money that they make from kidnap ransoms can they spend on their own?" Mr Singhal asked. Dacoits are always on the run from ravine to ravine and jungle to jungle. All they spend on is weaons—a gang needs at least an extra Rs 50,000 for weapons every year. As for food and clothes, they only have to descend on villages for their *nazrana*. The rest of the money, Mr Singhal is convinced, goes to relatives. "Even if a such a law is unjust, it is injustice which is reversible. A dacoit's murders are not." ■

How Mustaqim was killed

At eight o' clock in the morning of 4 March, two men got down from a bus at Galuapur in Kanpur district. One of them was carrying a bag. Having rested for about 15 minutes, they proceeded on foot to their destination—Dastampur, a village about two furlongs from Galuapur. A dusty path leads to the village which ends at a mosque at the edge of the village. As they were proceeding, two policemen—a sub-inspector and a constable—on a bicycle approached them from the opposite direction. While one of the men ignored the policemen, the one carrying the bag got nervous, left the path and started walking away. The policemen got suspicious, told them to stop, and enquired about their identities They were told to open their bag. The constable suddenly spotted a revolver in the bag. But before he could react, one of the two men grabbed the revolver and started grappling with the sub-inspector. What the sub-inspector did not know then was that the person who was grappling with him was none other than Baba Mustaqim, a dreaded dacoit with a reward of Rs 20,000 on his head (Mustaqim was a close lieutenant of Malkhan Singh but had, last year, formed his own gang). The man carrying the bag was his cousin, Imamuddin.

While Mustaqim fought with sub-inspector Hariram Pal, the constable caught hold of Imamuddin. In the course of the fighting, however, the revolver slipped from Mustaqim's hand and fell, breaking the trigger. Realising that the two men were now unarmed, Hariram Pal shouted for help. But none of the villagers who had gathered came forward to help. Fortunately for the sub-inspector, however, a group of boys going to a nearby college saw what was happening and came to the aid of the policemen. They caught Mustaqim and Imamuddin and beat them up. All along, Hariram kept asking the two people who they were. Finally Mustaqim looked at the sub-inspector and said: "Do you want to know who I am? I am Baba Mustaqim."

There was a stunned silence. No one could have imagined that Baba Mustaqim would be caught, and that too in such a manner. The first person to react was Hariram Pal. He told the crowd of villagers to move away and asked one of them to go to Derapur police station and get reinforcements. After that he sat down beside the two men, now tied up with chords, and waited for the reinforcements to arrive.

Mustaqim

Imamuddin

Baba Mustaqim was very tired. On the night of 3 March he had left Kanpur for Dastampur. His plans were interesting. He wanted to meet his brother before proceeding for Bombay. After the Behmai incident, the heat was on and the police were giving the *baghis* a very tough time. As a matter of fact, Mustaqim had admonished Phoolan Devi for massacring so many people. He himself did not believe in killing people indiscriminately. Anyway, he thought, in Bombay at least he could lose himself in the crowd and relax. Accordingly, he had come to meet his brother to give him some money. He had picked up Imamuddin at Akbarpur and taken a bus for Galuapur. But before he could reach Dastampur he was caught.

Shortly, four constables arrived in a tempo. Mustaqim knew what was coming. He told the sub-inspector that he could kill him, but Imamuddin should be spared as he was innocent. Hariram Pal assured him that no one would be killed. But Mustaqim knew this was a lie. He then said that he had some money with him which he wanted to distribute among the poor. According to eyewitnesses, there was a neat bundle of 100 rupee notes, which could have amounted to as much as Rs one lakh. The sub-inspector kept the bundle along with four rings from Mustaqim's fingers, his watch and a chain. Baba Mustaqim then kissed his amulet, and once again requested the police to spare the life of Imamuddin. This time the policeman did not say anything. Instead he instructed the constables to throw them into the tempo. Mustaqim and Imamuddin were dumped like sacks into the tempo; the policemen got in and drove off. From Galuapur, they took the road to Derapur. But instead of proceeding to the police station they stopped near a bridge. They dragged Mustaqim out. He was first shot dead with a twelve bore gun and then the rest of the constables riddled the dead body with bullets. After this, Imamuddin was dragged out and shot equally brutally.

This story has been gathered from eyewitness accounts. The police, however, have a more respectable version. According to them, on the morning of 4 March two groups of policemen were returning from duty when they spotted two men. On seeing the police, both men started running. When the policemen tried to stop them, they opened fire. The policemen returned the fire and killed both of them. They later learnt that one of the persons they had shot dead was Baba Mustaqim while the other, they said, remained unidentified.

Twenty seven days after Baba Mustaqim was shot dead, Phoolan Devi, along with Man Singh and five other members of her gang went to meet his brother to pay her condolences and narrowly missed getting caught by the police, after a 15-hour ordeal. Had she been caught alive, she would have, probably, suffered the same fate as Mustaqim.

Karnataka's money-spinning colleges

NEW MEDICAL
COLLEGES ?
AUCTIONED TO!
HIGHEST BIDER

LOUISE FERNANDES reports on the mushrooming growth of medical and engineering colleges

> SITUATIONS VACANT
>
> *Have money? Want to become a doctor or an engineer? Come to Karnataka, the land of opportunity. Talent and qualifications not really necessary. Apply immediately with details of caste and community.*

This is how it would read if the Karnataka chief minister R. Gundu Rao translated his open invitation into an advertisement. As the situation stands in this state today, any community or group wanting to set up an engineering or medical college has been assured *carte blanche* in affiliation by the government irrespective of their having proper facilities, adequate and qualified staff and objections raised by university authorities. To add further incentive, assurance has been given to these "lucky" groups that they would be able to collect ample financial security by way of capitation fees.

Indications of Mr Rao's "liberalised" professional education policy were first felt when he went against health minister A. K. Abdul Samad's advice to grant the newly set up privately-run M S Ramaiah Medical College, permission to collect capitation fee on 90 per cent of the seats each year as against the normal government prescribed figure of 20 per cent. This "outrageous" act came as an insult in the face of the recently released Dr K. N. Raj Committee (Karnataka Universities Review Commission) report which said· "If such students (who pay these high capitation fees) carry strong commercial attitudes into the medical profession they can hardly be blamed. In reality many of them do not remain in the country but migrate elsewhere." "Migrate to that beautiful village called America," adds Dr G. Ramakrishna, member of the Bangalore University Academic Council.

Mr Gundu Rao formed his ministry in January 1980. At that time, Karnataka had 15 engineering colleges and 10 medical colleges. Today, the figure looms at an alarming 37 engineering and 12 medical colleges, with applications from 15 private organisations wanting to get into the business of "medical teaching shops" alone.

The recent gesture by Mr Rao has sparked off a series of heated academic discussions and political wranglings. There is little guarantee that this will end with mere academic protests. Already 400-odd junior doctors and around 800 medical students of the Bangalore Medical College and other medical colleges in the state have threatened to intensify their relay hunger strike and boycott of classes which was launched on 8 December. They would further endeavour to paralyse all hospitals in the state, Dr. Tilak Kumar, one of the striking doctors and member of the Students' Union Executive Council, told this correspondent If the central government and the Indian Medical Council (IMC) did not take immediate steps to correct the present situation, Karnataka hospitals would be in an even bigger mess than they are in today.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), Karnataka branch, has expressed equal concern at the "apparent lack of foresight and planning" that should normally go into providing the absolutely necessary infrastructural input before starting technical colleges, particularly medical colleges. They have deplored the "unsavoury sight of the state government actually making use of communal forces in the guise of furthering the cause of secularism."

"Colleges are being sanctioned on communal or caste considerations with the added, pernicious and loathsome provision to collect enormous amounts of capitation fee. Once permission to collect capitation fee is granted it should be obvious to any one that it is not the weaker section or the underprivileged that are being helped, but only those who can afford to pay and buy the seats," Dr (Mrs) Sudha M. Kallianpurkar, IMA Karnataka president, says. "The argument that a certain (albeit small) percentage of seats are being given without capitation fee is specious to say the least," she adds.

"Why should Karnataka take over the responsibility of producing all the doctors and engineers in the country?" asked Dr G. Ramakrishna. Condemning this indiscriminate sanctioning of new colleges with capitation fees as "brazen-faced selling of education as a commodity," he said the invitation to all communities to take up the offer was "even worse." Referring to the latest Karnataka example of the Dr Ambedkar Medical College he reasoned, "How many scheduled caste candidates can afford to pay around Rs 1.6 lakhs per head for a seat?" The gesture of the chief minister has only made it more easy for blackmarketeers to "whitewash" their money and for "sub-standard" candidates to "fulfil their fathers' dreams," Mr A. K. Subbaiah, MLC and state BJP president told *Sunday*.

Concern over this burning issue revolves around some of the following questions: 1) Is there really a need for more medical and engineering colleges? 2) If there is, should these be run by private organisations or the government? 3) If by private parties, who is to set the standards of education, qualifications of the staff and equipment? 4) What are the effects of the capitation fee system on the education process? 5) Is it feasible to compartmentalise educational institutions on a communal basis? 6) In the medical sector, will the increase in colleges really fulfil the much-talked of rural requirements? 7) In the engineering sector, can the students passing out be ensured of jobs in industry? 8) And again, should the emphasis be on engineers or skilled technicians? 9) By indiscriminate opening of new colleges and increasing seats in these two disciplines do Karnataka doctors and engineers run the risk of having their degrees de-recognised?

At present, among the states, Karnataka has the second largest number of medical colleges. The number of colleges in the states are: Maharashtra

(14), Karnataka (13), Tamil Nadu (9). UP (9), Bihar (9), AP (8), Gujarat (5) and Kerala (4).

Karnataka has the highest medical college/population ratio. As per the norms prescribed by the Health Survey and Planning Committee, Karnataka requires only seven medical colleges. There are actually 13. In the country at present there are 106 medical colleges with an intake of roughly 12,000 students per year. Roughly the same number of doctors pass out each year. In Karnataka the intake is around 1,400 students per year. Recently it was reported that 80,000 doctors were estimated to be unemployed in the country. Hence the reasoning that the establishment of new medical colleges would aggravate the unemployment problem.

Private medical practice in villages cannot be remunerative. Rao argued that the more doctors graduating, the more would be forced to go to the villages, thereby fulfilling rural requirements. However, Prof. V. Ramalingaswami, director-general, Indian Council of Medical Research, argued differently in Bangalore recently, albeit about the country as a whole and not specifically with reference to Karnataka He dismissed the view that flooding the market with a constant supply of medical graduates would pressurise doctors to take up jobs in rural areas. The economic theory was "not valid" here as the situation dealt with highly sophisticated and trained persons (as opposed to mass-produced consumer goods)

The concerned authorities should take stock of the present facilities available to those few who do take the plunge In addition to monetary emoluments (which were understandable considering the high finances involved in medical education) doctors needed professional satisfaction. This satisfaction would only be felt if, after all the years of sophisticated training and indoctrination in the finer points of medical care, there was an easy and ready access to proper tools and supplies of their trade, he said.

It must be remembered that the new doctors of today would be practising for the next 30 years. With the rate of scientific discovery being what it is, medical advancement in the next 30 years was expected to be tremendous. What were the facilities available in the rural areas, or even in the primary health care centres in small towns for dissemination of this knowledge to young doctors? What were the library facilities available to those who wished to carry on the process of "continuing education" so important in this case?

Given a different national economic order and a more systematic manpower planning programme, the situation may change. However, today, there were more doctors in the country than could be usefully absorbed by either the government or society, Prof. Ramalingaswami said. He was talking on a nation-wide situation. However, there cannot be one right-thinking person in Karnataka who will not feel that finger pointing at him too.

According to a report on the case for new medical colleges, believed to have been submitted to the chief minister in September 1980, it had been pointed out that the government should first concentrate on improving health facilities before setting up new medical colleges The report is said to have pointed out that many of the objectives of the health department could be achieved even without increasing the number of doctors. For example, payment of enhanced incentives to acceptors of sterilisation and increased publicity would result in significant improvements under the family welfare programme. Similarly, greater priority to the improvement of drug supply, equipment and the appointment of nurses, health workers, radiographers and other non-medical personnel would also yield good results, the report is believed to have suggested. Having made his historic announcement to open more medical colleges early in December 1980, Mr Rao obviously decided to ignore the validity of the report.

Those asking to set up private medical colleges have, perhaps, put forth the argument that the government would not have any financial burdens if private parties started medical colleges. This would obviate the problem of diverting scarce government resources to medical education instead of improving the existing health facilities, the argument would perhaps run. However, a look at the Karnataka situation has proved that all the parties who have applied for permission to start medical colleges plan to utilise clinical facilities provided by the government. M. S. Ramaiah College, the first of the private colleges in Bangalore, now avails of the clinical facilities of the government-run K.C. General Hospital. Dr Ambedkar Medical College has been granted the facilities of the Lady Curzon and Bowring Hospital, now being used by post-graduate students. This would deprive nearly 30 post-graduate students of their education.

R. Gundu Rao

In a strong protest against this paradoxical situation, the IMA Karnataka has said. "The government, on the one hand, allows private institutions to start colleges, allowing them to collect capitation fees. On the other hand, the same government spends an equivalent amount of money by providing hospital facilities to the same institutions and the enormous amounts of tax payers' money is spent on training students, many of whom are from outside the state. We fail to see the logic in this since this further reduces the facilities available for clinical teaching even in the government medical colleges."

The impending creation of an artificial market for mass-produced doctors has given rise to the all-important fear of de-recognition by the IMC. With the proliferation of medical colleges at a greater rate than the availability of hospital and clinical facilities, students would not be able to gain the sufficient practical experience Hence, the apprehension of the striking doctors that, after all their efforts, their degrees may not be valid outside the state's borders.

In the face of these arguments against sanctioning of more medical colleges in the state, the chief minis-

Ask and you shall receive

Mr Rao's actions are reminiscent of the gestures of Argentina's Eva Peron (Evita) As popular legend recalls, the woman behind Argentina's President Juan Peron was popular with the masses because she played up to their whims and fancies. They say that if the sun shone and Evita was happy then some lucky man got a grant to build his house or to go on vacation. None of these gestures, so popular with the people, were of any lasting value. In fact, so they say, when Evita died she left the economy in shambles.

Mr Rao's moves have been viewed in much the same way Life for those who could catch him on a sunny day would be pleasant indeed, people in Bangalore say. If you're lucky you could get a licence to run a profitable money-minting medical teaching shop, they say. Even if you're not so lucky, but you belong to the right community or caste, you could get the right to build an engineering college. And that would be equally profitable.

And here Mr Subbaiah reminded this correspondent of the example of the politician who agreed to defect to the Congress(I) because he was promised, not a berth in Mr Rao's ministry, but a medical college for his constituency of Bijapur!

ter's largesse is suspected to be in the interests of his political profile and pocket, rather than in the interest of the student community or the recipients of healthcare in the future

Similar factors play their roles in the opposition to sanctioning of more engineering colleges in Karnataka, which have expanded around 110 per cent within the brief tenure of Mr Rao. The arguments against capitation fees and private colleges are the same. University officials and concerned engineering professors have not denied that there is a need for well-qualified engineers in the country today. But they have taken a dubious view of the unorthodox manner in which Mr Rao has sanctioned and granted affiliation to the 22 new colleges—without the permission and sanction of the university.

Eighteen out of 22 engineering colleges have been set up by the "brazen flouting of all normal procedures," a member of the Bangalore university syndicate told this reporter. "We bend our heads in shame every time this issue comes up because, ultimately, the university has not been able to reason with or restrain the chief minister. Standards of engineering education have already been diluted in this state and, with the mushrooming of so many more colleges, set up without any adequate equipment whatsoever, standards are going to be diluted even further," he pointed out. As in the case of medical degrees, the over-riding concern of engineering college academics is that the mass-produced engineers may find themselves outlawed from working in any other state.

"We do not question the prerogative of the government in sanctioning colleges But we do question the government's flouting of all procedures in this process," the syndicate member said. The Karnataka State Universities Act 1976 as amended up to 9 September 1980, gives the university body certain authority to object and binds parties, seeking affiliation to the university, down to certain requirements. However, in the present situation, all these requirements are being thrown to the wind and the government has repeatedly gone over the head of the university to grant the colleges affiliation.

Instead of fulfilling the requirements before getting affiliation, the state government has allowed the new colleges to come up without adequate staff, resources and materials. The problem here is that there is no binding force which would ensure that the colleges are adequately equipped. Ensured of their affiliation anyway, why should they care? This has been amply exhibited by the findings of a syndicate-appointed committee which examined the facilities available in three recently-affiliated (by the government) engineering colleges of Bangalore university. In all the three colleges, the committee found that the staff was under-qualified for the job; library facilities were totally absent; tools and equipment necessary for practicals were inadequate even for the first semester and hostel facilities, as required, were sadly lacking. And yet, these colleges had been granted affiliation by the government.

"The need of the hour is skilled technicians and not engineering graduates," academic circles, including Mysore university vice-chancellor K. S. Hegde, vehemently demanded. The indiscriminate sanctioning of new engineering colleges, despite all sensible reasoning is obviously for "political considerations" and to satisfy various castes and vested interests, the syndicate member said. He dismissed Mr Rao's thought process in this respect as being "lopsided" and "totally lacking in academic interest or technical reasoning "

Altogether, Mr Rao's actions have been viewed as a popular gesture to win over the various caste groups in the state. And in the case of those already on his side, to sweeten their mouths periodically. That is what prompted him to lay the foundation stone of the Vokkaligara Sangha's Kempegowda Medical College on the eve of the Basavanagudi byelection. Unfortunately, this bid to win over votes for the Congress(I) in that area backfired when the Janata candidate, belonging to the same community (a minority in the constituency) captured the seat.

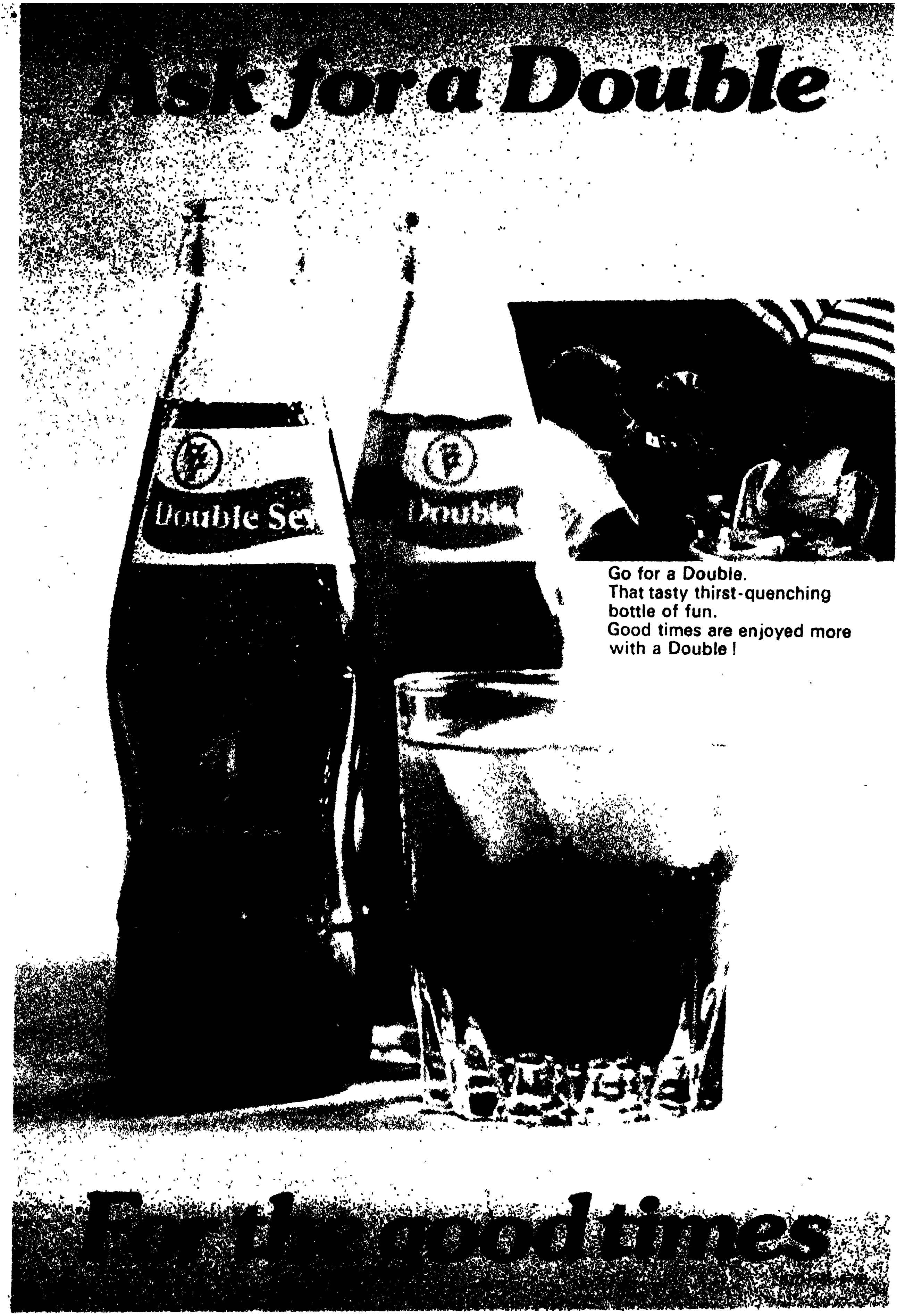
CM R. Gundu Rao's insistence on dictating educational policy in his own state has upset the functioning of Bangalore university. His indiscriminate sanctioning of new colleges (B.Ed, medical and engineering) without consulting the university has been tantamount to disregarding the established rules and regulations. Article 53 of the Karnataka State Universities Act amended upto September 1980 binds colleges down to certain prerequisites before affiliation may be granted. As a reaction to the government's disregard of the rules and regulations the university will probably go to court over the question of the government's legal right to take matters into its own hands.

How did the government come to sanction these colleges? The answer is quite simple. One would not have to look very hard to find the hand of a legislator behind each new college. The university academic council had planned to go to court on the matter of the B.Ed colleges. If they had won they would have applied the same legal medicine to the matter of medical and engineering colleges. Certainly the root of their disapproval was similar in each case. Unfortunately, Mr Rao's government was a step ahead before the university body could arrive at a final decision. And before it could initiate legal action, the government resorted to an action of its own, with the governor Mr Govind Narain issuing an ordinance giving all powers to the government for granting affiliation to colleges. The university's objections have thus been totally ignored.

Even if the university were to challenge the government's open door policy on new colleges there are strong indications that the mushrooming process would continue. These indications have been amply exhibited by the findings of a local enquiry committee constituted by the university.

There is every indication that if the colleges in question do come up with a better case, they would be given permission to inaugurate their teaching shops this year. Nowhere in the report is there a mention of the word 'capitation fee'—the bugbear of the university and the striking medicos. In fact, on the whole, the committee under the chairmanship of Dr J. S. Saxena, director of health and family welfare services, has made out a strong case for the need to start new medical colleges. There are certain "remarks" in this extraordinary report which smacks of a similar reasoning exercised by the CM. Consider "There is unemployment among doctors. Considering this fact there are many parts in the state and the country specially in the rural areas which do not have medical men qualified in the modern system of medicine. It cannot be said that there is no need to start new medical colleges. Further, it may be stated that there is no reliable data available regarding unemployment among doctors."

Also consider what the committee has to say about the objectives of the Vokkaliga Sangha in starting a medical college. The Sangha says: "It is a well-known fact that in most of the villages situated on the outskirts of the city there has been a staggering low percentage of educated youths particularly in professional courses like engineering and medicine. This has been mainly because of the competition that these rural students have to face against the more competent students hailing from highly educated and better placed homes." To this the committee's response: "This is a laudable objective. The committee should keep this in mind while fixing the location of the medical college and hospital buildings." In the light of what professionals have to say about the rural requirements and medical college students, this response from the committee is astonishingly naive keeping in mind the large amount of captitation fees. Is the committee gullible enough to believe that the location would make a difference when the premium to be paid is around Rs 1.6 lakhs per seat for a medical student? Are the committee members trying to suggest that by locating a college in a village, the villagers of the area, poor as they are, stand a better chance of competing with more competent students hailing from highly educated backgrounds? As the academic council member, Dr G. Ramakrishna told *Sunday*: "This ostensible responsibility for the community and rural Karnataka professed by the promoters of the medical colleges in question is a cruel joke, a big farce and a hypocritical declaration."



Go for a Double.
That tasty thirst-quenching
bottle of fun.
Good times are enjoyed more
with a Double !

S ATIBAL

This baby was stolen and sold

SAUMITRA BANERJEE went to Varanasi to report the story of a heartless crime

Nineteen-year-old Urmila Tripathy's labour pains had finally started, and by seven on the morning of 20 March the family had rushed her to the Rani Chhogi Devi Birla Matri Mandir in Varanasi. Within 50 minutes of her arrival, Urmila Tripathy had given birth to a healthy boy. The father, Krishna Shankar Tripathy, a 25-year-old BA final year student at the Harish Chandra Degree College, was overjoyed, as was the rest of the family: this was the first child, and it was a boy. The grandmother (Urmila's mother-in-law) was particularly happy and proud. She would come early every morning to ward number three, where Urmila and the child had been shifted, and spend the whole day at the hospital, leaving only when it was time to go home to sleep. On 23 March, too, she stayed late to help tend both the young mother and the three-day-old child.

There were three other beds in ward number three and all of them were occupied. It was a normal, quite average hospital scene: there was no great discipline about visiting hours—it was quite the done thing for relatives or outsiders to spend the day with their loved ones in the hospital. Periodically a nurse would come around to make the perfunctory checks, enquire from the patients if they wanted anything in particular. Strange and familiar faces kept constantly passing through the room. And that was the way it was on the night of 23 March. Nurse Leelamani Singh was on duty. Around 8.30 pm, two women entered the ward and began playing with the newborn babies lying on the four cots. The women were not unknown to the new mothers—at least their faces were familiar, although no one knew exactly what they did in the hospital. Most thought that the two women were part of the large hospital staff. The women came to Mrs Tripathy's bed too and began to make the right cooing noises, about how healthy the child was, could they play with him...? Mrs Tripathy remembers that dreadful evening only too well. "I did not know who the women were," she recalled, "but I had seen them in the hospital before. Besides, they seemed familiar with the place, so no one really objected to their playing with the babies. They came over to my bed, and one of the women tried to pick up the baby from the cot, but I

S ATIBAL

Krishna Shankar Tripathy and Urmila Tripathy with their baby prevented her from doing so. Anyway, it was time for me to feed the baby, and I told them that, implying that I did not want to be disturbed. One of them replied saying that she was not going to run away with the baby, was she? I looked at my mother-in-law, who, indulgently, did not seem to mind this woman playing with my son. So I handed over the baby to them, and they started fondling him and saying what a pretty baby it was. I watched them pretending to be so affectionate, and I got a bit suspicious: call it mothers' instinct.

"After about five minutes, a young man entered the ward. He was around my husband's age, if not younger. He came in, walked up to the women, and commented, 'What a beautiful baby! Won't you let me play with it too?' The woman holding the baby immediately handed over the baby, adding that he should be careful when handling such a young child.

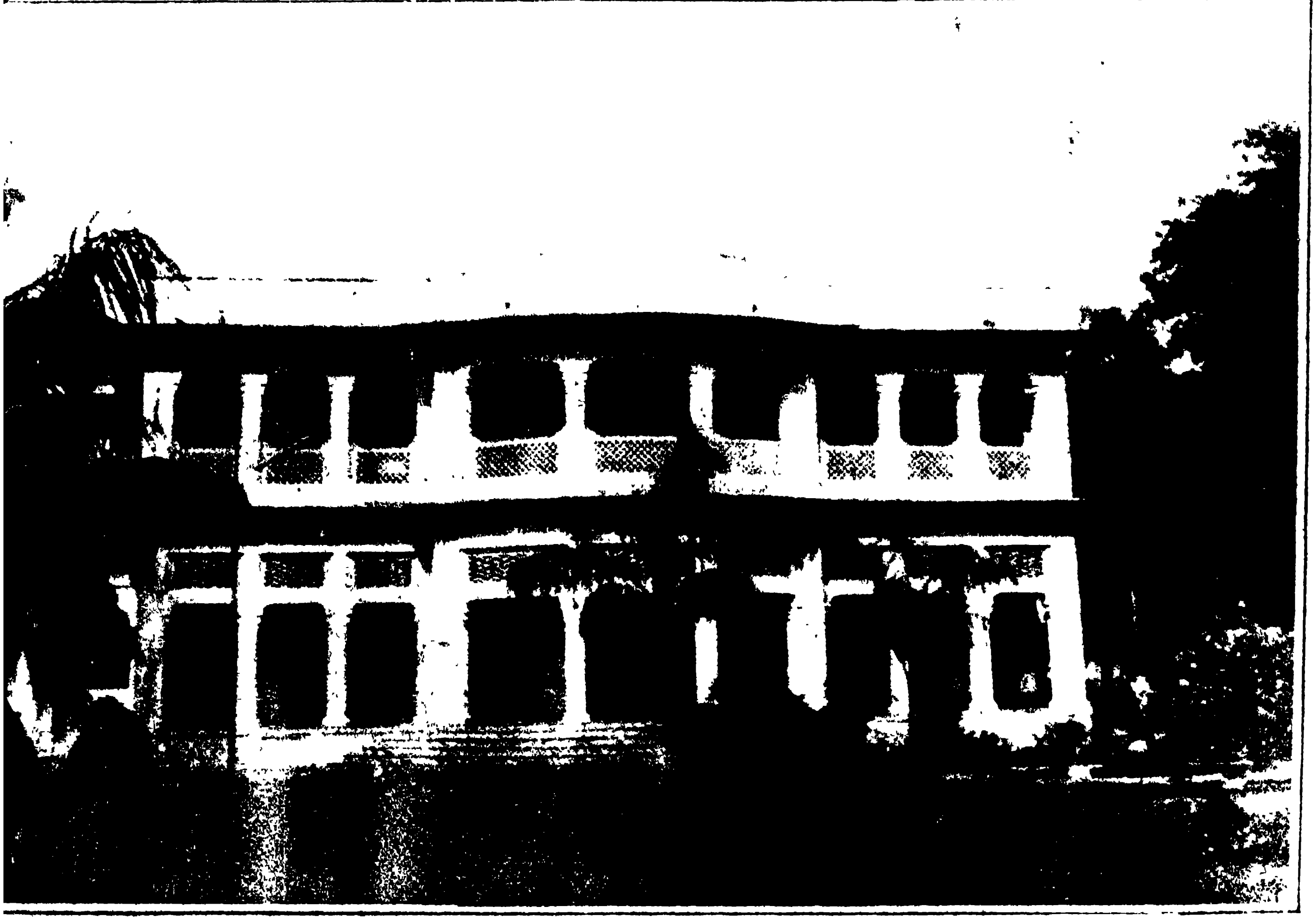
"The young man then requested the two women to go and fetch some *paan* for him from the shop across the road. The two women seemed to jump at the suggestion, and quickly left the ward to 'fetch the *paan*.' I now began to get really suspicious, particularly since I could see the young man slowly edging his way towards the door, with the baby still in his arms, pretendng all the while that he was 'playing' with the 'lovely child.' Now, my mother-in-law too began to get suspicious, but we did not know what precisely to say—how could we accuse the man of anything? Just a brief while later, he played his trick. Suddenly, he began to point at the baby in the adjoining cot, and started to shout loudly that there was something seriously wrong with that baby. We all turned to look at this baby. During the while that our attention was diverted, the man slipped away. By the time I turned around, he wasn't there. I knew at once that he had stolen my baby. I screamed, and burst into tears."

The theft of the baby, who was destined to be sold for Rs 5,000 was as neat as that. It may have been neat, but it was not quite that simple: there were many others involved in this racket, and what the Varanasi police have not uncovered about this specific case could lead them to a sordid statewide racket in Uttar Pradesh—a racket in which heartless criminals specialise in stealing, or buying babies at a "throwaway" price which can then be sold to couples desperately wanting a child—or, more often, to unscrupulous men who feed the babies so that they can grow up to be slaves or criminals on a leash. For instance, some of the smuggling between UP and Nepal in conducted through such unfortunate children who are made the couriers. But to return to the story of Mrs Urmila Tripathy and her child (ironically, the slogan of the maternity hospital in which she delivered is *Matri shishu raksha kendra*, or Mother-child protection centre).

Urmila Tripathy's loud wails created a commotion, and as soon as people realised that a baby had been stolen, they rushed out to give chase to this young thief. But the man could not be found. The nurse, Leelamani Singh, was informed, and she informed the *chokidar* and made an effort to look for the man. When he could not be traced, Leelamani Singh went to the medical officer of the hospital, Dr P Berry, who called in the police. The police combed the place, but found not one of the suspects. The men and women who had conducted the theft had melted into the narrow, congested lanes of Varanasi. The last anyone had seen of the women was the *panwallah* opposite the hospital who said that around nine two women who fitted the description had come to buy *paan*. He had no idea where they had gone.

The same night, Krishna Shankar Tripathy's elder brother Dayashankar lodged an FIR at the Chowk police station

About a year before the night when Urmila Tripathy's baby was stolen, Rama Devi and her husband, Nanda Lal, paid their first visit to Dr Dulal Chand Chatterjee (doctor of ayurvedic medicine and surgery) at Dafe village



S ATBAL

The Rani Chhogi Devi Birla Matri Mandir

"I do"

She was the original ice princess. He, the dark Count. Could he be the eighth...?

He was but a dark shadow as he shinned up the old brownstone. "Tonight she look me up" the well-waxed moustache did a grim fandango ... "Whether she like it or no."

But hark! What light shone yonder? It was the soft glow seeping through her skylight. "Beulah" he could hear her say faintly, "Peel me another grape."

He crashed through the glass, landing neatly at her feet.

"Reeves" said Lady Samantha, "Have the pane attended to immediately. One feels a slight draught in here." She turned towards him and her words hung like icicles ... "Since you're already in, you might as well have a drink."

"No spikka da English" said the Count, kissing her hand. "But the language of love I am to spik very well. A hundred moments you refuse to eye me. My diamonds you say no. My gold-plated Ferrari you say no. No?..."

"You are being a crushing bore" Samantha flounced her skirts. "Just like George ... my fourth, you know ... or was it the seventh? Oh dear!" she touched a hand to her temple. "Keeping count of husbands tires me so."

"That it is! That it is! After the Count, you count no more. And [illegible] ... the VIP [illegible]

"Oh, I know [illegible] he in Gstaad last year?"

"No no no. The VIP baggages. From India."

The Count clapped his castanets and his man-in-waiting did a parachute drop through the skylight, laden with VIP luggage.

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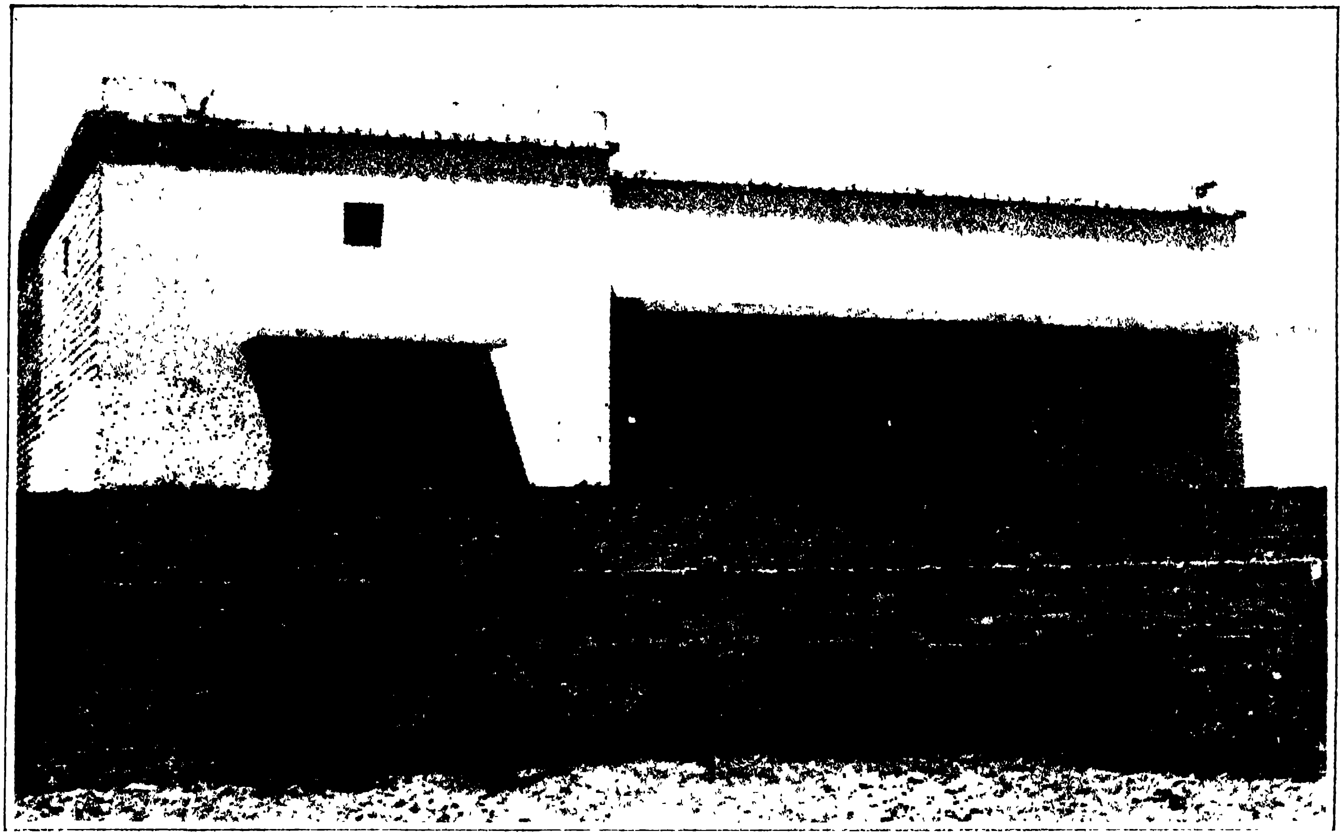


S ATWAL

Dr Dulal Chand Chatterjee's home-cum-clinic at Dafe

on the outskirts of Varanasi. Her problem was that though she had been married for 12 years she had no child. Could the doctor help with his brand of medicine? They had consulted other doctors, but had failed: Now they had come to Dr Chatterjee, in the hope that he could be able to do something. They had heard of Dr Chatterjee from some friends.

Dr Chatterjee and his wife Mala Chatterjee ran a small maternity centre in Dafe village. It was, in fact, housed in a part of their home; a few beds had been added to one of their rooms where they took on delivery cases. Mrs Mala Chatterjee was the midwife. It was very useful for villagers of Dafe and the surrounding villages, because there was hardly any other convenient place which provided the same facility.

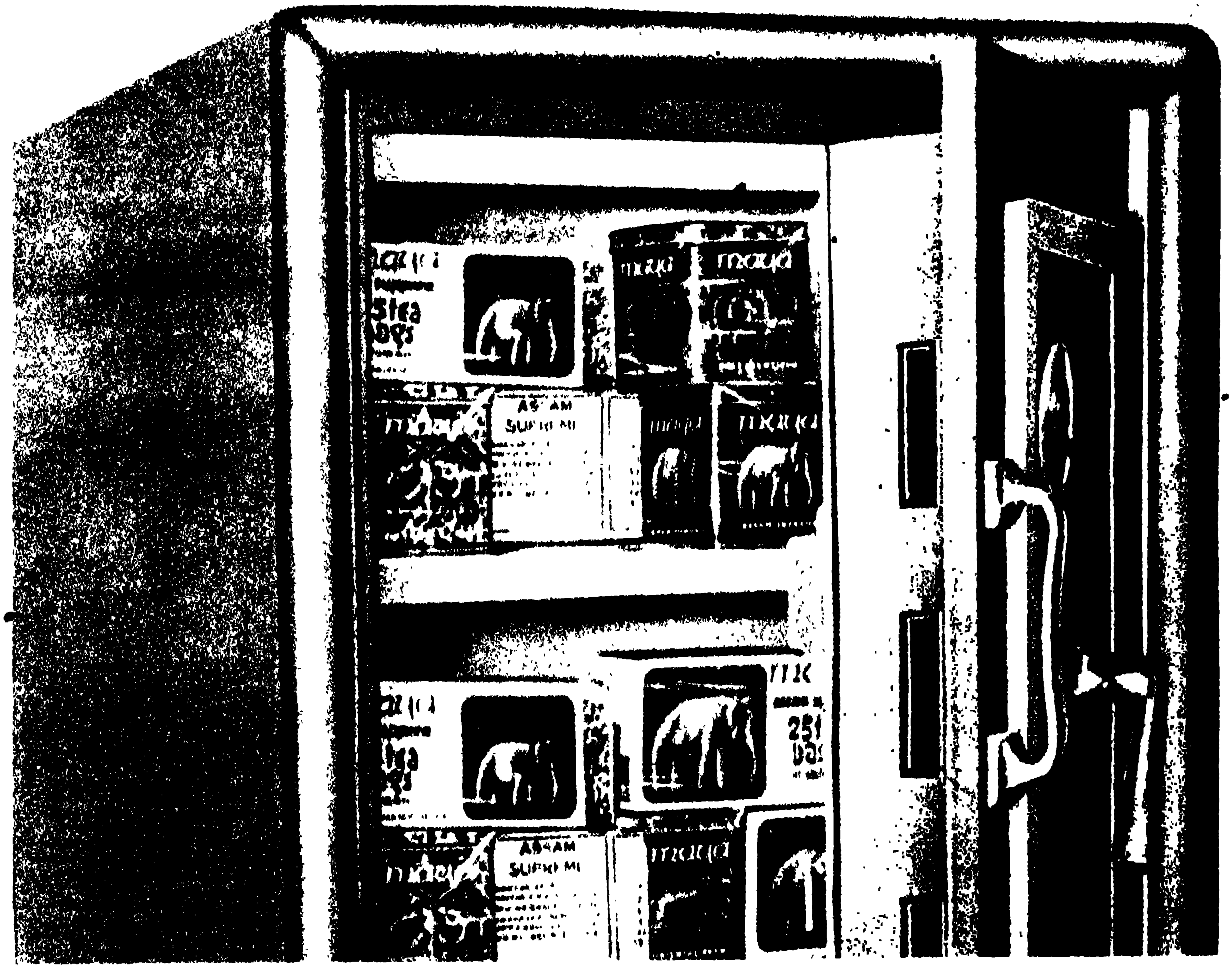
However, despite continued treatment, Dr Chatterjee failed to do anything for Rama Devi. It was at this point in the first week of March, that Mala Chatterjee came up with a suggestion: she could provide Nanda Lal and Rama Devi with a baby—but only on payment of Rs 5,000 In return, they would get a baby boy. Mrs Chatterjee placed another condition. Rama Devi would have to be admitted into their maternity centre a couple of days before the baby was handed over to them so that an illusion could be created that Rama Devi had given birth to the child. She also promised that a birth certificate would be given, to avoid any problems in the future. The couple agreed and paid Mrs Mala Chatterjee an advance of Rs 3,000: the rest would be paid after the baby came. The couple then returned to their home in Shivpur and waited for Mala Chatterjee to contact them.

Mala Chatterjee, having got the advance, then set about making enquiries from her various contacts in city hospitals about the possibilities of finding a child. First, she enquired from a contact in Sir Sunderlal Hospital at Benaras Hindu University; she even paid it a couple of visits. But nobody seemed enthusiastic about cooperating in this cruel mission. Next, she tried Ramnagar Hospital, but once again she was unsuccessful. But she was finally rewarded when she tapped a contact in Rani Chhogi Devi Birla Hospital, a sweeper called Champa. Champa told her that a baby boy had been born on 20 March in the hospital, the child of Mrs Urmila Tripathy, and it might be possible to steal the baby if nurse Leelamani Singh cooperated. According to our sources, Mala Chatterjee contacted Leelamani Singh through Champa and a deal was struck: both Leelamani Singh and Champa would get a cut. Leelamani Singh would be paid Rs 1,000 and Champa Rs 500. It was also decided that the baby would be stolen on the night of 23 March, and the nurse and the sweeper were paid an advance.

But Mrs Chatterjee wanted to get familiar with both the hospital and the patients there, so that she should not be regarded as a stranger on the night of the crime. Leelamani Singh cooperated, and for the next two days Mala Chatterjee moved around freely in the wards of the hospital. Also, on the day the deal was struck, Mrs Chatterjee contacted Rama Devi and had her admitted into their maternity centre.

On 23 March, Mala Chatterjee, accompanied by her friend Jayanti and Jayanti's 12-year-old son, and Alokranjan De (20), the son of the driver of the vice chancellor of BHU, arrived at the hospital at four pm. They found, however, that nurse Sarbati Sharma was on duty at the time so they went away, to return later. At around eight pm the four of them came back to the hospital. By now Leelamani Singh was on duty and while Alokranjan De waited outside with Jayanti's son, Mala Chatterjee and Jayanti entered ward number three.

Soon they were playing with Mrs Tripathy's son and, as planned, Alokranjan De entered the ward at around 8.45 pm. it was he who took the baby outside, he told Jayanti's son to rush to the *paan* shop and inform his mother and Mrs Chatterjee that he was waiting for them near the gate. They met there; Mala Chatterjee took the baby from Alokranjan, got into a rickshaw and went to Godholia, the centre of the city. From Godholia she went in a auto-rickshaw to Lanka, near the Banaras Hindu University and from there she took a rickshaw to Dafe. Once she reached home, she handed over the baby to Rama Devi. The next morning Nanda Lal came over to Dafe, paid the rest of the money to Mala Chatterjee, and took his wife, along with the baby, back home to Shivpur. Before leaving, the baby was given a birth certificate.



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The police, however, were looking for the baby. On 25 March the Chowk police received information that in the Teliana area of Chetgunj, a woman by the name of Gulabi Devi had overnight produced a child. The police immediately rushed to Teliana and arrested Gulabi Devi and took the baby into their custody. They thought this was the baby stolen from Mrs Tripathy. The child was sent to Kabirchaura hospital for examination and the doctor certified that it was less than seven days old. Further, convinced that the baby belonged to Urmila Tripathy, the police handed him over to her.

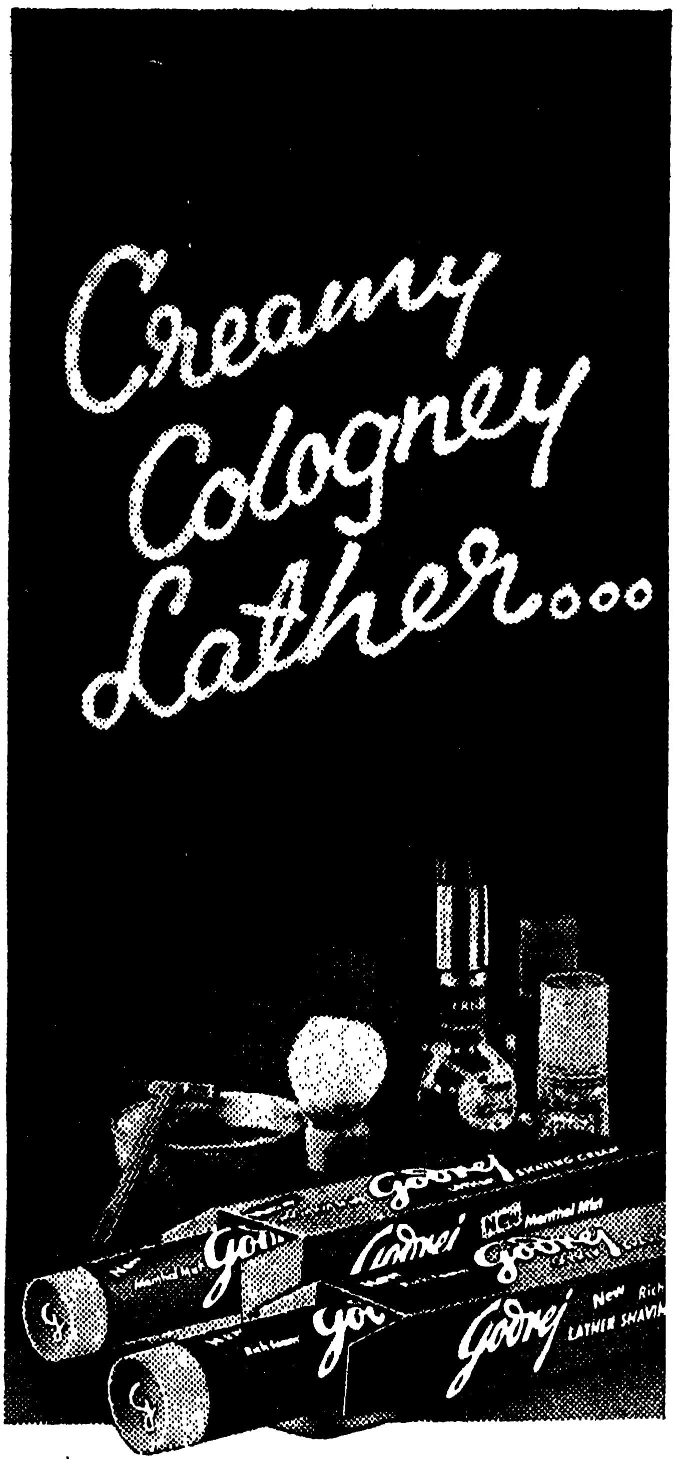
However, Gulabi Devi stuck to her version. She said that the baby was illegitimate and actually was the child of a relative of hers who lived in Mohinia in Bihar. She had been entrusted with the baby, as the real mother was too ashamed to take it home. Krishna Shankar Tripathy heard Gulabi Devi's story—and was caught in a quandary. He did not have the heart to tell his grieving wife that the baby the police had given her might not be really hers. As he said, "I could not tell this to my wife. After the baby was stolen she had become hysterical. When she got his baby, which she believed to be her own, she calmed down. It was just not possible to tell her that this was not her baby. So we kept it a secret from her. But we did not give up looking for our baby."

When Rama Devi and her husband returned to their home in Shivpur, they realised they had not taken one factor into account—their neighbours. So when Rama Devi returned along with a baby, her neighbours were naturally curious. They wondered how Rama Devi, who was obviously not pregnant had suddenly returned after three days with a baby which she claimed to be her own. Inevitably, there was gossip. In the meantime, the local newspapers had flashed the news that a baby had been stolen from Rani Chhogi Devi Birla Hospital. Suspicions rose. And the thought did enter someone's head that Rama Devi might have brought along the stolen baby. A resident of Shivpur informed Kailash Shankar Tripathy about the mysterious arrival of a baby to their locality. Tripathy, along with his brother rushed to the spot on 27 March to see the baby. And, of course, he immediately recognised the baby to be his son. He informed the police, who raided the house of Rama Devi, arrested her and took the baby away. In a short while Nanda Lal too was rounded up. From the couple, the police got to know of Mala Chatterjee and her husband, who were then arrested.

But this is not an isolated case. On the night of 26 March, for example, the Gazipur police recovered a baby which had been stolen from the district hospital at Gazipur on 22 February. Besides, there have been cases of babies being stolen, especially in the districts of Gorakhpur, Deoria and Basti. But the purpose is different: stolen babies are often made into beggars or trained in smuggling goods across the India-Nepal border.

The modus operandi is fairly simple. Babies are either lifted from hospitals, with the connivance of the hospital staff, or children are simply kidnapped from the streets. In any district there are normally five or six big gangs and these gangs provide the cover and environment in which the kidnapped children grow up. They are trained to smuggle goods across the border, or told to beg in the streets. Children are said to be especially useful in smuggling as they often manage to slip the eye of the customs and excise officials. They are trained to cross the border avoiding the main thoroughfares. Besides, the risks involved are far less, as most of the children do not know the identities of the leaders. A constant watch is kept on the children so that they do not speak with other people or expose, wittingly or unwittingly, what they were doing.The children are the slave decoys behind which adult criminals find protection, and through whom they earn fantastic wealth.

Children who are made to beg face a similar fate. They are kept under constant vigil and have to hand over whatever money they collect, being given only a fraction of it to eat. But most tragic is the fate of those children who, before they are turned out to beg, are maimed—to gain the sympathy of the public. ■



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Moscow's men are everywhere

By BARUN SENGUPTA

Who can claim more credit for splitting the CPI again? The CPI(M)? Mrs Roza Deshpande's All India Communist Party? Or the Soviets? The truth, of course, will never be fully known, but it can be safely said that all of them played their part, working independently of one another.All the three needed the split very badly.

Since the first split in the Indian communist movement in 1964, leaders of both the CPI and the CPI(M) have been working for further splits in the opponents' camps. The CPI(M) suffered the first major setback, with the Naxalites leaving the party under the direct encouragement of the Communist Party of China (CPC). But thanks to the adventurist policies of the Naxalites, the death of Chairman Mao and the change in the attitude of the new Chinese leaders towards India, the Naxalites ceased to matter. They could not really damage the credibility of the CPI(M).

The CPI's problems started after the fall of Mrs Gandhi in 1977. Since independence there has always been a strong group in the CPI pleading for cooperation with the national bourgeoisie led by the Congress. This group gained ascendency within the party after the Telengana revolt of 1948 failed miserably. But it could not gain absolute control as long as Ajoy Ghosh was general secretary, and those who were to later form the CPI(M) were still there.

But after Ajoy Ghosh's death and the party split, the truncated organisation, under the leadership of Mr S. A. Dange, with the active patronage of the Soviets, went ahead with its policy of close cooperation with the national bourgeoisie. This made the party a virtual appendage of Mrs Gandhi's party and organisation. There was some opposition to this within the CPI, but it was insignificant, and by and large the CPI benefited from its close relationship with Mrs Gandhi.

The CPI leadership got its first severe jolt with the emergence of Sanjay Gandhi and the strong anti-communist line he took. He started attacking the communists and their allies openly. Prominent pro-CPI and pro-Moscow leaders within the Congress came under a cloud. Both the CPI and Moscow were alarmed. The CPI, in its usual manner, first wanted to dismiss the Sanjay phenomenon as the voice of the reactionary and pro-American elements inside the Congress, and tried to claim that inspite of Sanjay Gandhi there was a strong progressive group within the Congress led by Mrs Gandhi.

But this policy of trying to differentiate Mrs Gandhi's line from Sanjay Gandhi's failed; Mrs Gandhi came out strongly in support of her son. She was also seen trying to improve relations with China and the USA. This put Moscow and Ajoy Bhavan in a quandary. They could neither go against Mrs Gandhi openly, nor accept Sanjay Gandhi So they divided the work between themselves. While Moscow tried to placate Sanjay Gandhi, the CPI tried to criticise him. Then came the shattering results of the March 1977 elections. They seemed to be more disastrous for Moscow and Ajoy Bhavan than for Mrs Gandhi.

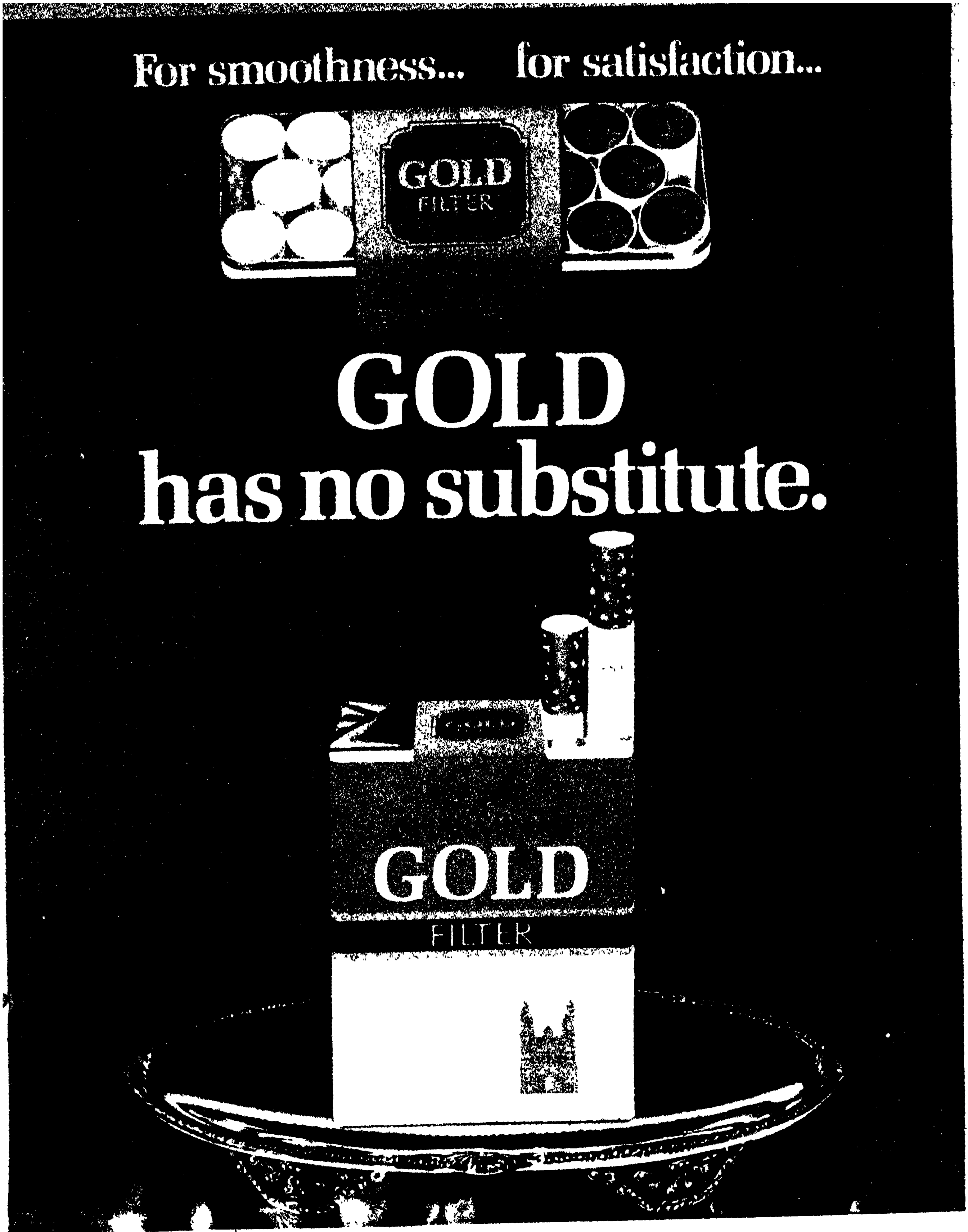
But it did not take them long to chalk out a new strategy. Moscow immediately started forging links with the Janata government and cultivating individual Janata leaders. The CPI, on the other hand, immediately took a strong anti-Mrs Gandhi line and tried to return to the mainstream of the left movement in the country. But basically it remained anti-Janata. Mr Dange, of course, did not agree with this policy of his party. In spite of Mrs Gandhi's massive defeat he remained her supporter: he was almost the lone pro-Moscow Indian politician who stood by her. In the next few months it became clear that although Moscow was going all out to fraternise with the top leaders of the Janata, including Mr Morarji Desai and Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, the pro-Moscow elements within and without the Janata were all trying to bring down the government: Messrs Bahuguna, Limaye and later Chandrajit Yadav from within, and the CPI from without.

Moscow became particularly interested in the CPI(M) after March 1977, and the CPI(M) also joined the group bent on bringing down the Janata government. Two CPI(M) leaders, Mr P. Ramamurthy and Mr H. S. Surjeet, were particularly active in their efforts to bring down the Janata and, significantly, they were also the two most pro-Moscow leaders in their party. When the Janata government collapsed, all the pro-Moscow elements in India, with the exception of Mr Dange, rallied round Mr Charan Singh and desperately tried to save his government. But alas, that government did not last and, outwitting all her enemies, Mrs Gandhi returned to power in January 1980.

Now the Moscow lobby in the country felt truly lost There were no pro-Moscow elements inside the ruling party. And Sanjay Gandhi began to emerge as a very powerful force in the Congress(I). The CPI could not immediately do a volte face and become pro-Mrs Gandhi again. The CPI(M) was, in any case, totally opposed to that. Moscow, of course, did not wait for long to offer its total support to Mrs Gandhi But this did not entirely satisfy Mrs Gandhi During Mr Brezhnev's last visit to New Delhi Mrs Gandhi made it clear to him that she was unhappy with the role of the CPI

The time, therefore, was ripe for another split in the Indian communist movement. Either at the behest of Moscow, or on his own initiative, Mr Dange and his supporters became very vocal in their support of Mrs Gandhi. Ultimately his daughter, Mrs Roza Deshpande, broke away and formed the All India Communist Party. Mr Dange did not immediately join the new party but instead went on a long visit to Moscow. He returned a more vocal supporter of Mrs Gandhi and a more vociferous critic of the official CPI leadership. Ultimately he went on to attend the first congress of the new AICP After this, the CPI leadership has little option except to expel him.

Far from losing as a result of this split, Moscow has gained. Now it has a pro-Moscow lobby on both sides of the political fence in India. On Mrs Gandhi's side are Mr Dange and other pro-Moscow elements within the Congress(I) who are trying to stage a comeback after Sanjay's death. On the other side, the so-called left and democratic front is led mostly by pro-Moscow leaders. This group will become more cohesive once Mr Dange is expelled, and then it will try to become the strongest opposition force in the country. Thus, whichever way you look at it, whatever political developments overtake the Indian scene, Moscow cannot lose: its men are everywhere.



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"I have never been a *chamcha* and never will"

When Dr Subramaniam Swamy did not join the Bhartiya Janata Party in 1980, many people found it surprising. Then, after the successful Sarnath convention of the Janata Party (see *Sunday* 1 March), party president Chandra Shekhar removed him from the general secretaryship: it was commonly felt that this was the price he had to pay for opposing Chandra Shekhar at the convention. A party president has every right to choose the officebearers he or she can work with best, but Dr Swamy had interesting views on why he was removed from his post. *Anil Saari* met him in Delhi.

MUKESH PARPIANI

Subramaniam Swamy

Q*: What exactly happened?*

A: I learnt from the newspapers that Chandra Shekhar had dropped me from the general secretaryship. Of course, it is not an elected post, therefore he can have anybody as the general secretary, but the manner in which he has done this has left a bad taste in the mouth—not only in my mouth but also in the mouth of the workers of the party.

Q: What has been the impact?

A: This action is not good (though) fortunately it does not matter to me personally. The remarkable thing about India is that a man's political prominence does not depend on the position he holds. Take the examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Jaya Prakash Narayan. This is the greatness of the country. But two things have happened since Chandra Shekhar's action. One is that the image of the party, built over the last eight months of cohesiveness, has suffered a blow. People have begun to talk about Chandra Shekhar's clash with Subramaniam Swamy. The second thing is the timing of the action was so bad that people are accusing Chandra Shekhar of authoritarianism: This is not what I am saying, but what party workers are saying. This is also not good for Chandra Shekhar himself. He has been president of the party since 1977. Many people have left the party while he has been the president. The impression was there that he cannot keep people together. This action, the timing of it, compounded by his interview to *Sunday* (1 March) has revived that image. Suppose Mr Chandra Shekhar, after the Sarnath session, had acted in a manner which created the impression of cohesion and unity, how much the party would have gained! His action has nullified the gains of Sarnath.

Q: Was your candidacy for the presidentship only prompted by your desire to stop the readmission of Raj Narain into the party?

Subramaniam Swamy, Morarji Desai and Chandra Shekhar at the Janata conference in Sarnath

KAINTH

A: There were other issues. Chandra Shekhar has been president for four years. It is necessary that other people should get opportunities to lead too. The second issue was that in every executive committee meeting, except at Sarnath, Chandra Shekhar had been submitting his resignation and asking the party to find somebody else. Every time we had persuaded him to continue. This time I felt that if Chandra Shekhar was reluctant, then somebody else should come forward. There was to be an election in Sarnath. Then when people proposed my name—incidentally, your magazine talked total nonsense when it said that I found nobody to propose my name—I readily accepted.

But these were not the most important issues. What lent urgency was that Chandra Shekhar went on record in public, and in the letters he wrote to Raj Narain that he wanted to take people like him and other known party breakers. I sensed that if such a thing happened it would be disastrous for the party.

Only after reaching Sarnath I realized two things. That, contrary to his public statements and past behaviour, Chandra Shekhar was keen to be president for one more term and that these past resignations had no meaning. The second thing I realized after reaching Sarnath was that the election for the president could not be held at all because the national council had not been fully constituted. So if I had insisted on staying in the race the elections would have got postponed and the newspapers would have highlighted that the Janata Party was unable to hold elections and all kinds of interpretations would be given to it. So the issue of having a new president became less important. But the admittance of people like Raj Narain concerned the party's future and it remained an issue. So in the late hours of 11 February, at the national executive meeting, Mr Chandra Shekhar made it clear that he would not press for taking people like Raj Narain into the party. I withdrew in the interests of maintaining the party's stature and to make the decision unanimous. The power to nominate the executive committee was also given to Chandra Shekhar only because technically we could not hold elections then. Otherwise, none of us would have agreed to such an undemocratic procedure of authorising the president to nominate the executive committee That happens only in the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Q: When did your differences begin?

A: There was no problem till he wrote a letter to the general secretary of Raj Narain's party in which he said that Raj Narain should pay no attention to my objections to his re-entry. That letter was made public by Raj Narain but Chandra Shekhar apologised, so I forgot the whole episode. This happened in December.

Then, some BJP leaders, who are burning with jealousy because I am prospering in the Janata Party—their ambition is that I must rot in the wilderness like, say, Balraj Madhok—they have been petitioning Chandra Shekhar to get rid of me. In fact, Nanaji Deshmukh had a long lunch session with Chandra Shekhar in January. Vijay Kumar Malhotra has been making periodic trips and Mr Chandra Shekhar, although he has never told me, has made some remarks to them which were uncharitable. When I was dropped from the general secretaryship, the people most happy were the BJP leadership and Raj Narain.

Q: Why exactly has the BJP turned hostile to you?

A: In my opinion, my continuing to survive in politics is the greatest threat to the BJP because they maintain discipline within their ranks by showing what happens to people when they fall out with them! That they disappear into dust! When I made the decision to stay in the Janata Party and not join the BJP, Mr Kushabhau Thakre threatened me with dire consequences. He gave me illustration after illustration of how politicians had disappeared from the public eye after the RSS withdrew support to them. He quoted me a long string of names. Well, I am not susceptible to blackmail, unlike Atal Behari Vajpayee, because I have nothing to hide. I have no mistresses, I have no unholy liaisons. After all, you can blackmail people only because of wine, women and money.

When I was general secretary, a large number of BJP people were breaking ranks and joining the Janata Party. I'll give you the example of Madhya Pradesh where 35% of the old Jana Sangh is now with the Janata Party. The BJP was worried, but now they are celebrating after my removal from general secretaryship. They are spreading the canard that I am joining the BJP soon. If I prosper politically, the BJP will not be able to maintain discipline even for one day. They are maintaining discipline by fear and not by persuasion.

Q: But the Janata Party seems to be a party of leaders without a mass base.

A: In my opinion in the next elections the Janata Party will come to power. The Janata Party has now acquired a halo of its legacy; it could keep prices down. The second reason is that 58% of the electorate is below the age of 40 and the young people today still have faith in the Janata Party. The third reason is the Janata Party is the only party in the opposition which is acceptable to Muslims, harijans, tribals, farmers, north Indians and south Indians. No other party can claim this virtue.

Q: The way you put it, the Janata Party sounds like the Congress of the opposition.

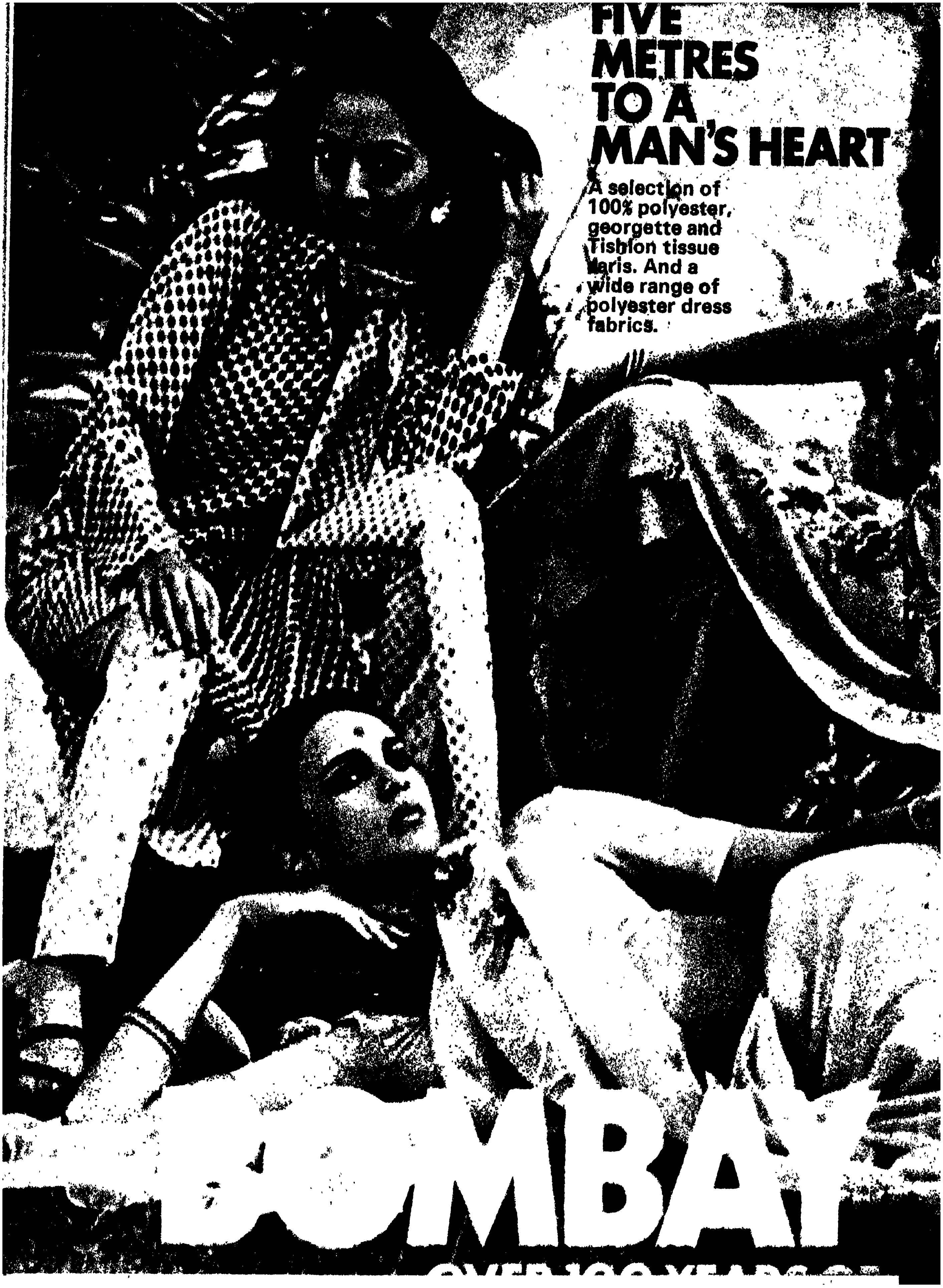
A: But that is the strength of the Congress! The Congress strength was it could accommodate, it could correlate and it could assimilate the varieties of homogeneity that is the Indian population. Why is it that the communist party, after fifty years in the field, with a terrific organisation and the financial backing of the Soviet Union, cannot get more than 2% of the vote in the Lok Sabha elections? Because they cannot accommodate, correlate and assimilate. And the same is true of the BJP, whose fraudulent claim to be the national alternative is laughable.

Q: There is an impression that Morarji Desai supported your candidature for the presidentship of the Janata Party.

A: The impression that I stood at the behest of Morarji Desai is an insult to both of us. Mr Morarji Desai and I are friends and when I agree with him I say so, and whenever I disagree with him I say so. Morarji Desai is the only person I know who, if he does not suspect your motives, will accept even unpleasant disagreements without changing his opinion about you. He is a genuine democrat and I have never asked whether he would agree to my nomination. I announced it to the press first. Then when I went to Bombay, to my constituency, I met Morarji Desai just to inform him about this, out of affection and regard for him.

Q: You are a Morarji admirer, but don't you think he should retire from politics?

A: Well, he has himself said he's not an aspirant for any position. The fact is that he's 85 years old, he's an old man who is campaigning for the party and touring all over the country without aspiring for any post. Morarji Desai's stature is higher today than when he was Prime Minister. He is our greatest asset. I admire Morarji Desai because he has shown that a man can rise to the highest executive position in the land without being anybody's *chamcha*. Leave everything else aside, the fact is that Morarji Desai, without being a *chamcha*, has risen from the position of a party worker to the position of Prime Minister. That is the inspiration I draw from his life. I never have been a *chamcha* and I never will be one. There is a theory floating in this country that unless you do *khushamad* (flattery) you have no future in Indian politics. Young men and women have to be educated that it is better to die than come up by *khushamad*, and that if you die fighting you have done something worthwhile for the country. ■



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There are nearly 100 errors in GANDHI

We gave the 202-page script of the film Gandhi *(being made by Richard Attenborough and financed substantially by the government of India) to a senior and responsible historian. He was shocked by the gross inaccuracies in John Briley's script and wondered how the government could have passed the script written by Briley and being used, except for very minor changes, for the filming. This is his report.*

Ben Kingsley as Gandhi

Rohini Hattangadi as Kasturba

Attenborough

NEMAI GHOSH

The script of *Gandhi* tries to give glimpses of Gandhiji's life in the context of his struggles in South Africa; then at Champaran; the anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation; the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre; the non-cooperation and the salt *satyagraha*; the second round table conference; the opposition to the second world war; and the partition and independence of India. Broadly speaking, what has been left out is Gandhiji's strong feelings for the "wrongs" in Punjab; the "betrayal" of the *Khilafat*; his attitude towards the "council-entry" of some of his associates; his parleys with viceroy Irwin; his renewal of civil disobedience in 1931; his battle against 'untouchability'; his part in the launching of the "Quit India" movement; his participation in the negotiations with Cripps and the Cabinet Mission; and his "one man army" to maintain communal harmony in east Bengal and Bihar.

The script takes into account some of the close Indian friends and followers of Gandhiji, e g. Nehru, Patel, Azad, Kripalani, and Mahadev Desai; but only rarely Pyarelal and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Jinnah does appear very often in the script, but invariably irrelevantly. There is a distinct preponderance of western characters in the script, including officials and non-officials, over their Indians.

Gandhiji and Kasturba

The script has scrupulously avoided all the controversies around Gandhiji, and also the way in which he won over C. R. Das in 1920, disarmed Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai thereafter, coaxed the temperamental Nehru, dealt with the charges of the leftists in the mid-1930s and hounded out Bose from the Congress in 1939.

Respecting a filmmaker's rights, I am willing to ignore a traditionally educated (on the late 19th century model) Gandhiji introducing himself in the American style: "My name is Gandhi, Mohandas K. Gandhi" (pp. 1, 10 and 189). Similarly, one can accept the scene which shows Gandhiji burying Kasturba in love in his bedroom in South Africa, with the statement that he would fast the next day as penance for lovemaking, or that if he enjoyed his sex a great deal the fasting must last for two days (p. 22).

However, a historian cannot but have serious objections to the errors of fact. Apart from betraying callous unconcern, such errors do falsify certain well-established facts. Cumulatively they lead to distortions of a very significant period of our nationalist history. Unfortunately enough, there are so many factual errors in John Briley's script that I often found it very embarrassing even to read through the script.

The script describes the assassination of Gandhiji by Godse and the presence of some of Godse's accomplices (Apte and Karkare) at Birla House. Soon after Gandhiji has been shot in the film, the crowd screams: "Kill him (meaning Godse)..." "There is another one..." "Catch him..." etc. (p. 4). The screaming suggests that Apte and Karkare were also caught on the spot along with Godse. The suggestion is wrong. We know that Apte and others were tracked down by the police much later.

Soon, thereafter, the script narrates through a flashback Gandhiji's humiliation in South Africa when he is not allowed to travel in the train in the first class compartment—a privilege reserved for Europeans there. Gandhiji protests: "I always go first class. I have travelled all over England and I've never..." (p. 10). Gandhiji's financial position as a student in England was rather weak and he was fastidious about his daily expenses in that country. I doubt if Gandhiji in his student days "always" travelled first class in trains in England or on the continent.

In another place the script describes Gandhiji speaking at a meeting of the "Indian Congress Party of South Africa" (p. 14). There was no party in South Africa by that name. The party which Gandhiji organised there was known as the "Natal Indian Congress."

Gandhiji's wife, Kasturba, is shown in the script to comment sorrowfully in South Africa: "I wish you (Gandhiji) were still struggling for work in Bombay" (p. 19). The comment suggests that Gandhiji was perhaps struggling as an unsuccessful barrister in Bombay immediately before he came over to South Africa. Factually, however, the too-brief career of Gandhiji as a briefless barrister in Bombay had very little significance in his life or his wife's. From Bombay Gandhiji shifted to Rajkot to earn his livelihood. He might have settled down there but for the sudden hostility of the British political agent at Kathiawar. At this point the offer of a job came from South Africa and Gandhiji gladly accepted it.

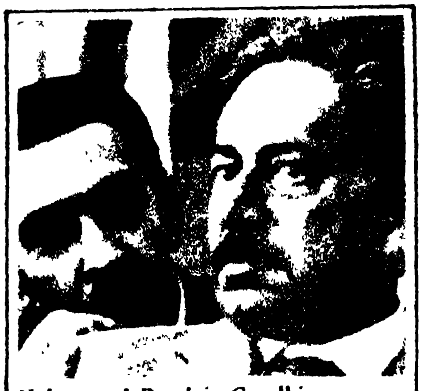
In the film Gandhiji will express his satisfaction over the English upbringing of his sons in South Africa and comment: "Just like proper English gentlemen. I am proud of them (the sons)" (p. 20). Gandhiji has written in his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* a whole chapter on the problems of educating his children while in South Africa. It is clear from this chapter that he had no intention whatsoever of anglicising his children, and that he sincerely meant to bring them up as Indians only

In the film, viewers will see General Smuts working in his office in Johannesburg (p. 22). But the fact is that Smuts had his office in Pretoria and not in Johannesburg. In the script C. F. Andrews—while dropping in at Gandhiji's house in South Africa and meeting him for the first time—says that he has come from India to help Gandhiji in his much talked about good work (p. 24). At another place, Andrews clarifies that he has been sent to South Africa by Gokhale (p. 58). The fact is that Andrews and Pearson were sent by Gokhale to South Africa to mediate between Smuts and Gandhi in connection with the controversial commission of enquiry on Indian immigration. This was known to Gandhiji and it was he who, in fact, received Andrews and Pearson at Durban at the end of their trying voyage from India. The sensitive nature of Andrews' mission in South Africa also could not permit him to agitate in Smuts' territory, as he does in the script (p. 42), in a church for white settlers in favour of Gandhiji's cause.

The script records an incident in which Gandhiji, following an agreement with Smuts over the issue of Indian immigrants, borrows some money from Smuts' secretary for hiring a taxi and promises, in view of the settlement, to return to India shortly (p. 50). The real position was that Gandhiji borrowed the amount for buying a railway ticket from Pretoria to Johannesburg but that he made no promises to return to India at all! The incident occurred at the time of an understanding between Gandhiji and Smuts in 1908. Smuts did not keep the agreement and Gandhiji and the Indian settlers had to continue their battle till another Gandhi-Smuts agreement was reached in 1914. Gandhiji thought of leaving South Africa only after the conclusion of the agreement of 1914. It seems the scriptwriter has confused the developments of 1908 with those of 1914.

Gandhiji

In the film Gandhiji will say of his sons: "Just like proper English gentlemen. I am proud of them." (But) Gandhiji had no intention ever of anglicising his children, and he sincerely meant to bring them up as Indians only.

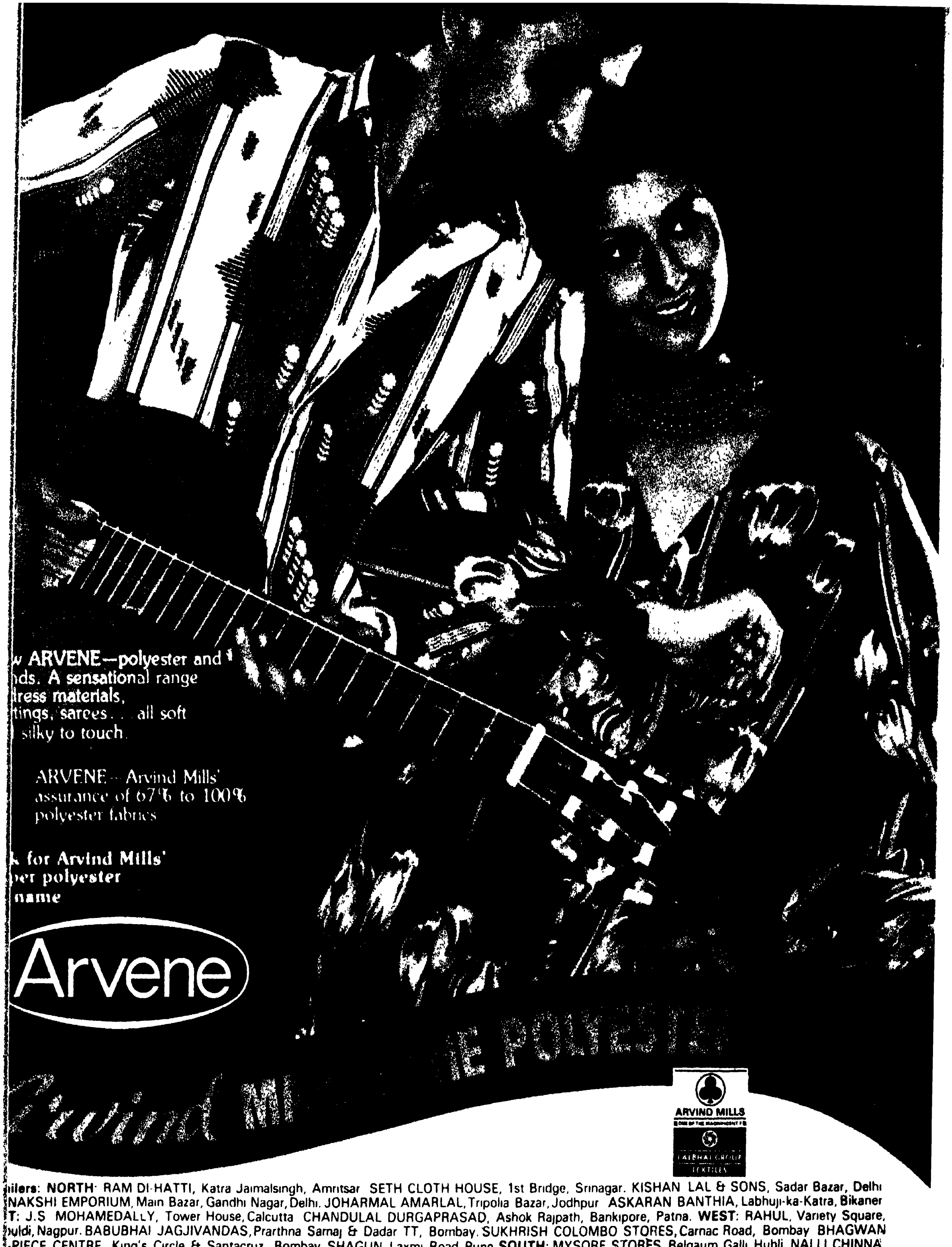

Nehru and Patel in Gandhi

The film will also show Gandhiji accepting a bowl of meat soup in a South African prison and his being told: "Don't worry about the meat—it's Hindu..." (p. 45). The scene is meaningless in view of the fact that Gandhiji was a strict vegetarian. By the time he reached South Africa Gandhiji's vegetarianism was based on dietetics and no longer on religious considerations.

The script by Briley shows Gandhiji arriving at the port in Bombay at the end of the South African period, in the company of his family and Andrews (p.53). As far as I am aware, Andrews was not with Gandhiji at the time of his arrival in India. Andrews came back to India from South Africa much earlier, in April 1914. The script shows Gandhiji being received at the port in Bombay by a very English-mannered young Nehru (p.54). It is well known that Gandhiji arrived at Apollo Bundar on 9 January 1915 and that Nehru recorded in his *Autobiography* that he met Gandhiji for the first time during Christmas week in 1916 at Lucknow.

The script maintains that Gandhiji's reception at the pier was organised by the Congress and it mentions a banner: "The Congress Party welcomes Gandhi" (p.54). The fact is, Gandhiji's reception at the pier was inspired by Gokhale through some members of the Servants of India Society, and that it had nothing to do

The film will depict Nehru and Patel in swimming costumes near an imaginary swimming pool in an equally imaginary house of Patel in Bombay. Jinnah also joins them and the three of them start gossiping—sometime in 1917!



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ilers: **NORTH**: RAM DI-HATTI, Katra Jaimalsingh, Amritsar SETH CLOTH HOUSE, 1st Bridge, Srinagar. KISHAN LAL & SONS, Sadar Bazar, Delhi
NAKSHI EMPORIUM, Main Bazar, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi. JOHARMAL AMARLAL, Tripolia Bazar, Jodhpur ASKARAN BANTHIA, Labhuji-ka-Katra, Bikaner
T: J.S MOHAMEDALLY, Tower House, Calcutta CHANDULAL DURGAPRASAD, Ashok Rajpath, Bankipore, Patna. **WEST**: RAHUL, Variety Square,
uldi, Nagpur. BABUBHAI JAGJIVANDAS, Prarthna Samaj & Dadar TT, Bombay. SUKHRISH COLOMBO STORES, Carnac Road, Bombay BHAGWAN
-PIECE CENTRE, King's Circle & Santacruz, Bombay. SHAGUN, Laxmi Road, Pune. **SOUTH**: MYSORE STORES, Belgaum Galli, Hubli. NALLI CHINNA
AMY CHETTY, Panagal Park, T. Nagar, Madras. MADHARSHA, 1-2/128 Purasawalkam High Road, Madras. V.K.R. SHOWROOM, 284 Oppankara Street,
batore HAJEE MOOSA SAIT & BROS., East Chitrai Street, Madurai. BOMBAY SWADESHI STORES, Secunderabad. DAYAL'S TEXTILES, Tilak Road,
rabad. LAKSHMI GENERAL STORES, Besant Road, Vijayawada. JOS BROS., M.G. Road, Ernakulam. CHAKOLA'S SILK HOUSE, South Bazaar, Trichur.

with the Congress! The script then shows Gandhiji leaving the port in Vallabhbhai Patel's car and records his conversation with Patel in the car while it is passing through the streets of Bombay (p.55). As far as I know, Patel who did not take Gandhiji seriously till the success of the Champaran *satyagraha* in 1917, was not present in Bombay to receive Gandhiji. He was at Ahmedabad at that time and met Gandhiji only in June 1916. It is interesting to find Patel talking patronisingly, like a senior, to Gandhiji, e.g. "When I first saw you as a bumbling lawyer here in Bombay, I never thought I would be greeting you as a national hero," or "Stop calling me Mr Patel; you are not a junior clerk any more" (p.55). These dialogues are ridiculous, for Gandhiji had never been a junior clerk at any time in his life and it was not possible for a person of Patel's age and legal experience to know Gandhiji as an unsuccessful barrister in Bombay.

The script then describes a garden party (meant to be a reception for Gandhiji in Bombay) at Patel's house where a beautifully dressed Mrs Motilal Nehru (Swaruprani) smartly comments: "No—I leave practical matters to my husband and revolution to my son" (p.56). We know that Gandhiji's reception was held at the palatial Bombay house of Jehangir Petit. I do not think either Motilal or his wife (or, for that matter, his son) were present at this reception. Young Nehru was known in 1915 to be preparing for some conventional political activity and had shown none of his later radical traits. In this party, the script describes Andrews introducing Gandhiji to Gokhale (p.56). The reality is that Gandhiji had first met Gokhale in 1896 and remained in close touch with him thereafter. Besides, Gokhale was not present at the reception for Gandhiji in Bombay and Gandhiji had to go to Poona to meet him there. But another great figure of Indian politics, Pherozeshah Mehta, was prominently present at the reception—and the scriptwriter has missed him altogether.

Briley's script takes into account the travels of Gandhiji to various parts of India to know his country and the people. The most important travelling companion of Gandhiji, apart from his wife, is shown here to be Andrews (pp.60-64). Gandhiji himself recorded an account of these journeys, undertaken in early 1915 on the advice of Gokhale, in his autobiography without mentioning Andrews. Andrews nevertheless did travel with Gandhiji once at this point, but only for the short distance from Shantiniketan to Burdwan.

The film will depict Nehru and Patel in swimming costumes near an imaginary swimming pool in an equally imaginary house of Patel in Bombay. Jinnah also joins Nehru and Patel there and the three of them start gossiping (sometime in 1917—the year the US joined the first world war) in very chummy terms (p.65). I doubt if these three persons at all knew each other well enough in 1917; in any case, I am certain that they had not developed such friendly relations. However, the astonishing part of the script here is not merely the intimacy of Nehru, Patel and Jinnah in 1917 but also a profound remark ascribed to Patel during the gossip session that the three of them should "convene a Congress Party convention (session) and demand independence" (p.65). As far as I know, Patel was hardly a member of the Congress in 1917 (not to speak of his being a very important leader) and the "demand" for "independence" in those days was a far cry not only for him, but also for many others of his age and stature.

The scriptwriter has put a ludicrous statement in Nehru's mouth: he tells Gandhiji that the people all over India are "walking in the streets offering garlands to the police—and to British soldiers." I am yet to come across a single instance in 1922 where the oppressed Indians garlanded British soldiers or the police in any part of India.

The script also describes a Congress convention or session (maybe of 1916 or 1917) where Jinnah and Gandhiji speak, with Patel in the chair (p.70). It was not possible for Patel to adorn the chair as the Congress president in any of the sessions of the time. He did become the Congress president at a later date in 1931.

In connection with the Champaran *satyagraha*, the script shows that the governor's office is situated at Champaran (p.89). The Bihar governor's office was at Patna, and it was not shifted to anywhere else at any time. The script further says that soon after the Champaran *satyagraha*, Jinnah in his Bombay house introduced Maulana Azad and Acharya J. B. Kripalani—both dressed in European clothes—to Gandhiji (p.93). I am not so sure of Acharya J. B. Kripalani (who is fortunately still among us to speak for himself), but Maulana Azad met Gandhiji only in January 1920, and that at the time of his meeting Gandhiji he was not dressed in European clothes.

In connection with the passing of the Rowlatt Bills, the film will depict a meeting of the "power circle" of the Congress in 1919 discussing the legislation. The "power circle" is shown to include Patel, Azad, Jinnah, Nehru and Kripalani and to which Gandhiji has recently been admitted (p.94). Apart from Jinnah, and to a certain extent Gandhiji, none among the others was prominent enough to be considered as an important leader of the Congress in 1919. After the anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation, Gandhiji will be seen in the film in the cell of a Bombay prison (p.99). It is known, however, that Gandhiji was not imprisoned during this agitation. He was arrested at Palwal on his way to Punjab, brought back to Bombay and released. The scriptwriter also imagines Bangalore to be one of the places where the anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation was a complete success (p.98). In reality Bangalore—which was then part of an 'Indian' state under a *raja*—was not a centre of agitation in 1919.

Between the end of the anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation and the beginning of the non-cooperation movement

Gandhiji with Nehru and Sardar Patel

Attenborough's predecessor

On 26 November 1980, Richard Attenborough commenced the shooting of the second international film that the government of India has attempted to co-produce in the 33 years after independence.

The first attempt was launched in 1956 with an even more illustrious filmmaker (Roberto Rosellini, the Italian neo-realist master) than the present attempt to make a film on *Gandhi* for the rest of the world. It was an attempt that ended with a scandal.

In their book *Indian Film*, Erik Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy record that Rosellini arrived in India in 1956, to make *India '57* which would be "a dozen or so short tales, vignettes of the new India, changing yet eternal." Encouraged and patronised by Jawaharlal Nehru, Rosellini decided to weave short stories around a huge hydro-electric project (possibly the Bhakra-Nangal complex), a *mahout* boy and some other 'images' of eternal India. The film was to be in colour and about 12,000 feet in length. Rosellini was also to produce 12 documentary films in colour. From the Indian side, he was to be supplied equipment and a crew from the Films Division of India, location facilities, railway expenses plus Rs 77,000 for expenses. The agreement envisaged that Rosellini would have distribution rights for Italy and France and that the government of India would control the distribution rights for the rest of the world.

Barnouw and Krishnaswamy add, "A contract was drawn up under which the Indian government became a partner in the production. For some time the details of the contract were not made public. More than a year later, in December 1957, in answer to a question from a member of the Lok Sabha, the essential facts were made known and the extent of government involvement revealed. The agreement had provided that Rosellini would make *India '57* under Indian government sponsorship."

The project fell through, however, in an equally secret manner when Roberto Rosellini eloped with Sonali Das Gupta, the pretty wife of Hari Sadhan Das Gupta, documentary filmmaker who had been assigned to assist Rosellini. The Sonali-Rosellini romance was later to breathe the air of scandal on an international level, since the Italian film director was then married to the famous actress Ingrid Bergman, who promptly sued for divorce, making way for the Sonali-Rosellini marriage.

Interestingly enough, the Indian government had also given permission for shooting of *Nine Hours To Rama*, though the film was never permitted to be shown in the country. Will Attenborough's *Gandhi* break that jinx and come back to India after it has been completed? Though there are no rumours yet of a torrid romance or anything else scuttling the film, nobody can be quite sure that the film will actually be shown commercially in India.

(sometime perhaps in 1920), the script shows Gandhiji, Nehru, Patel, Azad and Jinnah meeting Lord Chelmsford, the viceroy, to demand freedom from British rule (p.107). No such meeting took place. The leaders supposed to have participated in the discussions were, as I have already stated, not in the forefront of the Indian national movement. During the non-cooperation movement Gandhiji calls Patel, in the script, of *Sardar* (p.117). It is widely known that Patel earned his title *Sardar* from the peasants at a much later date in connection with the Bardoli *stayagraha* of 1928.

The scriptwriter compels Maulana Azad to inform Gandhiji that a "terrible" Hindu-Muslim riot broke out in Bengal during the non-cooperation movement and that the government, for this reason, imposed "martial law throughout Bengal" (p.119). It is common knowledge that martial law was imposed on Punjab in 1919 and not on Bengal and that no serious communal riot occurred in Bengal at the time. *In fact, inter-communal relations were at their best all over India between 1919 and 1922.*

Follwing the incident of Chauri Chaura, the film will show Nehru discussing with Gandhiji, in Jinnah's drawing room, the merits of withdrawing the non-cooperation movement (p.124). The fact is Nehru was in jail between December 1921 and March 1922, and he learnt about the withdrawal of the movement in the Lucknow jail. It was also impossible for Nehru to come to Gandhiji and announce that the movement had stopped everywhere, as the script says (p.128) or for Nehru to be present at the time of Gandhiji's arrest on 10 March 1922 (p.129). Soon after his release Nehru, of course, was known to have gone to Ahmedabad to witness Gandhiji's famous trial. The scriptwriter has also put a ludicrous statement in Nehru's mouth at the time of the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement. Nehru tells Gandhiji that the people all over India are "walking in the streets, offering garlands to the police—and to British soldiers" (p.128). *I am yet to come across a single instance in 1922 where the oppressed Indians garlanded British soldiers or the police in any part of India.*

The account of the civil disobedience movement in the script is also full of similar inaccuracies. The film will show the police beating Nehru ("blood streaming from his head") on the street and arresting him for selling illegally-made salt (p.151). It is true that Nehru was arrested in April 1930 for violating the salt law, but he was not beaten. To manhandle Nehru before the public in 1930 was difficult for the British authorities to even contemplate!

The script records the arrest of Gandhiji to be taking place during the civil disobedience movement at Dharsana (p.154). Actually Gandhiji was arrested on 5 May 1930 at a place called Karadi near Dandi. Again, the film will show Azad leading the *satyagrahis* at the Dharsana salt works (p.155). In reality the epic *satyagraha* at Dharsana was led by Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Imam *Saheb*, not by Azad.

Soon after the Gandhi-Irwin accord the script shows Irwin asking Gandhiji to attend an "all government conference in London" to discuss "the possible independence of India" (p.158). Irwin, the viceroy and the person who helped formulate British policy on India at that time, could not have spoken so ignorantly to Gandhiji. The conference in London was an ostentatious meeting of various groups, parties and interests in India to discuss with the British authorities some immediate constitutional changes in the government of India (known as the second roundtable conference) and not to discuss the country's attainment of "independence."

The real trouble for the scriptwriter of *Gandhi* appears to be the assigning of a suitable role for Jinnah in Indian politics. Jinnah is known to have opposed Gandhian politics and believed to have played a decisive role in raising the communal frenzy and partitioning the subcontinent. On the basis of this limited understanding, the script tries to project Jinnah as one who accepts Gandhiji's leadership but questions his non-violence from the viewpoint of a militant, as if whoever doubts non-violence must be a terrorist; later Jinnah is shown betraying the "leader" like a Judas. Jinnah will be presented in the film as a follower of Gandhiji at the time of the anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation in April 1919, although talking of "direct action" against the British government, *vis-a-vis* Gandhiji's policy of non-violence (p.94). He is also shown in the script to be staying with Gandhiji and his followers throughout the non-cooperation movement (p.124), talking loosely of "an eye for an eye" (same page) and helping Patel and others in calling off the non-cooperation movement (p.128). Not merely these, Jinnah will also wait in the film to join Gandhiji in his Dandi march (p.144) and he will be giving the impression of remaining with Gandhiji till the end of the second roundtable conference (p.161). Gandhiji "discovers" his "Judas" only during his imprisonment in the Aga Khan's palace and laments: "Jinnah has—has coöperated with the British" (p.165).

As a comment to this cock and bull story about Jinnah, we need only mention that he opposed Gandhiji's agitational popular politics from the point of view of a constitutionalist politician, and not from the angle of a militant; that he started his political career as a nationalist moderate and that he was in the Congress till 1920 when he left the organisation in protest against Gandhiji's policy of non-violent non-cooperation. He had thereafter nothing to do with the Congress and Gandhiji, except as a critic. Later on Jinnah became the foremost leader of the Muslim League in India, ran it exclusively on communal lines and allowed his communal position to be used by the British government from the mid-1930s as a counterpoise to nationalist politics.

The script describes Gandhiji's arrest for speaking against the war (in connection with the individual *satyagraha* of 1940-41) and of his being lodged as a prisoner in the Aga Khan's palace (pp.162-3). The fact is, Gandhiji was not arrested in individual *satyagraha* at all! His arrest came on 9 August 1942 in the wake of the "Quit India" movement, and it is only at this point that he was imprisoned, along with other Congress leaders, in the Aga Khan's palace.

The presentation in the script of the sequence of developments in 1946-'47is similarly erroneous.It shows first the finalisation of partition (pp.176) with only slight reference to the communal problem, then the transfer of power or the creation of free India and Pakistan (p.177) *and thereafter the occurrence of communal riots in Calcutta (pp.185-91) after independence.* This naturally conveys a totally wrong impression of the role of the communalists and communal riots in the partitioning of India.Most of us clearly know, and are able to recollect vividly, how the communal riot in Calcutta (August 1946) was engineered in order to create hatred all over India, how the holocaust was continued up to the middle of 1947 and how eventually the Indian people were left with no option but to accept the partition plan (June 1947).

There is also a staggering piece of concoction in the script (p.176) which shows Gandhiji—exactly before the transfer of power—imploring Jinnah to become the first Prime Minister of India in place of Nehru and to select his own Muslim League cabinet. Although the scriptwriter may have imagined this episode to show Gandhiji's anxiety for unity, the scene will in effect present Gandhiji as a senseless person devoid of any political wisdom. This is the trouble of trying to make a fictionalised film on a person who lived a life stranger than fiction.

The script compels Maulana Azad to inform Gandhiji that a "terrible" Hindu-Muslim riot broke out in Bengal during the non-cooperation movement and that the government, for this reason, imposed "Martial Law throughout Bengal." It is common knowledge that martial law was imposed on Punjab in 1919, and not on Bengal, and that no serious communal riot occurred in Bengal at the time.

Gandhiji with the Muslim League leaders

The historic meeting of the AICC, August 8, 1942, at which the "Quit India" resolution was adopted

It is surprising that the filmmaker and the scriptwriter have not cared to get the facts checked before finalising their script. But the really staggering part of the whole business is that nobody in our country and more so none at the governmental level, noticed the mistakes in the preparation of a film which we are financially supporting. Before offering their support to Attenborough, the government of India must have obtained views on this script from some of those whom the bureaucrats consider to be experts on the subject. Should we not now know who these experts were, and why they failed to see the errors so obvious in the script? ■

There is a staggering concoction which shows Gandhiji—exactly before the transfer of power—imploring Jinnah to become the first Prime Minister of India in place of Nehru and select his own Muslim League cabinet.

THE WORLD

Republican "golfers" in sex scandal

America's latest sex scandal involves three Republican members of the US Congress, Tom Railsback (49), Tom Evans (49) and Dan Quayle (34), and a curvaceous blonde, Paula Parkinson, who is better known for having posed for *Playboy* in just a garter belt. All four, it was discovered, shared a cottage in Florida where the congressmen were enjoying a "golfing weekend." When asked to explain their conduct, the "golfers" gave nervous replies of "She didn't proposition me," "I didn't touch her" and "I was in bed at 10.30 on both nights and shared a room with a man." Only Mr Railsback admitted that he had "made a big mistake." Whatever the consequences, from Don Quayle's subsequent appointment to the US Senate it is clear that the "golfers" have not jeopardised their political careers. Meanwhile, Paula Parkinson has claimed to be in possession of sound and video tapes of her earlier frolics with congressmen in an apartment in Washington She has also written a book on her sexploits with political bigwigs and is negotiating for its publication, in instalments, in either *Penthouse* or *Playboy*.

Qadhafi's wool over Swedish eyes

Libyan President Colonel Qadhafi has duped the Swedish government: 96 Libyan air force personnel, posing as civilians, are undergoing training in advanced electronics in the southern Swedish town of Vaxjo. Under the £ 20-million contract of 1979, between the Swedish electronics company, Telub, and the Libyan government, there was no provision for the training of military personnel.

Soviet prisons

Publishers Stephanus of Switzerland have come out with a sensational 379-page prison guide to the USSR. The book draws on official Soviet and emigre sources and lists more than 2,000 prisons, including the many "psychiatric centres." It has been complied by a Jew, Avraham Shifrin who, after a number of years in Soviet concentration and labour camps, escaped to Israel where he now lives.

"Killer Satellite"

The Russians have developed a weapon to incapacitate US "spy-in-the-sky" satellites. "Killer Satellite" was guided on to an American satellite over eastern Europe. "Killer Satellite" exploded, but short of its target which escaped unscathed. Experts believe that if "Killer Satellite" had zeroed in sufficiently enough, the target satellite would have been blown to pieces.

Life after death

Divorcee Jacqueline Rosser (32) of Gloucester (England) was certified dead by Dr Graham Voss Her body was taken in a coffin to a mortuary 10 miles away where, to the horror of a woman assistant, it was found to be breathing. A resuscitation team was called to revive the "dead woman." And Mrs Rosser came back to life again. She was removed to Coney Hill Psychiatric Hospital to receive treatment for depression and shock. Said her former husband Lionel Rosser: "I was on the point of breaking the news (of her death) to the children when I had a second telephone call telling me she was alive. It was a shock " Mrs Rosser was not available for comment.

Pop go the Russians—somewhat

Pink Floyd quartet. (l to r) Roger Waters, Nick Mason, Dave Gilmour and Rick Wright

British rock group Pink Floyd has achieved what is, at best, a dubious distinction: Soviet recognition and praise for its "four honest musicians, battling against tastelessness and banality in the world of popular music." The Communist Youth League paper *Komsomolskaya Pravada* carried a long article which claimed that pop music is "an ugly child of an unequal marriage between art and business;" only Pink Floyd has risen above this "degradation" and has successfully exposed "the wall which exists between the western elite and the popular masses."

Briefly

Coat case

The Committee of Awareness About Furs (CAAF) in Washington is making efforts to stop Mrs Nancy Reagan from wearing her mink coat. But its recent request for a meeting with President Reagan has been turned down by the White House. Mrs Reagan, it seems, is not willing to discard her coat. Her press secretary, on being asked whether the First Lady plans to continue wearing the coat, said: "I'm sure she does."

Nancy Reagan

US atomic waste

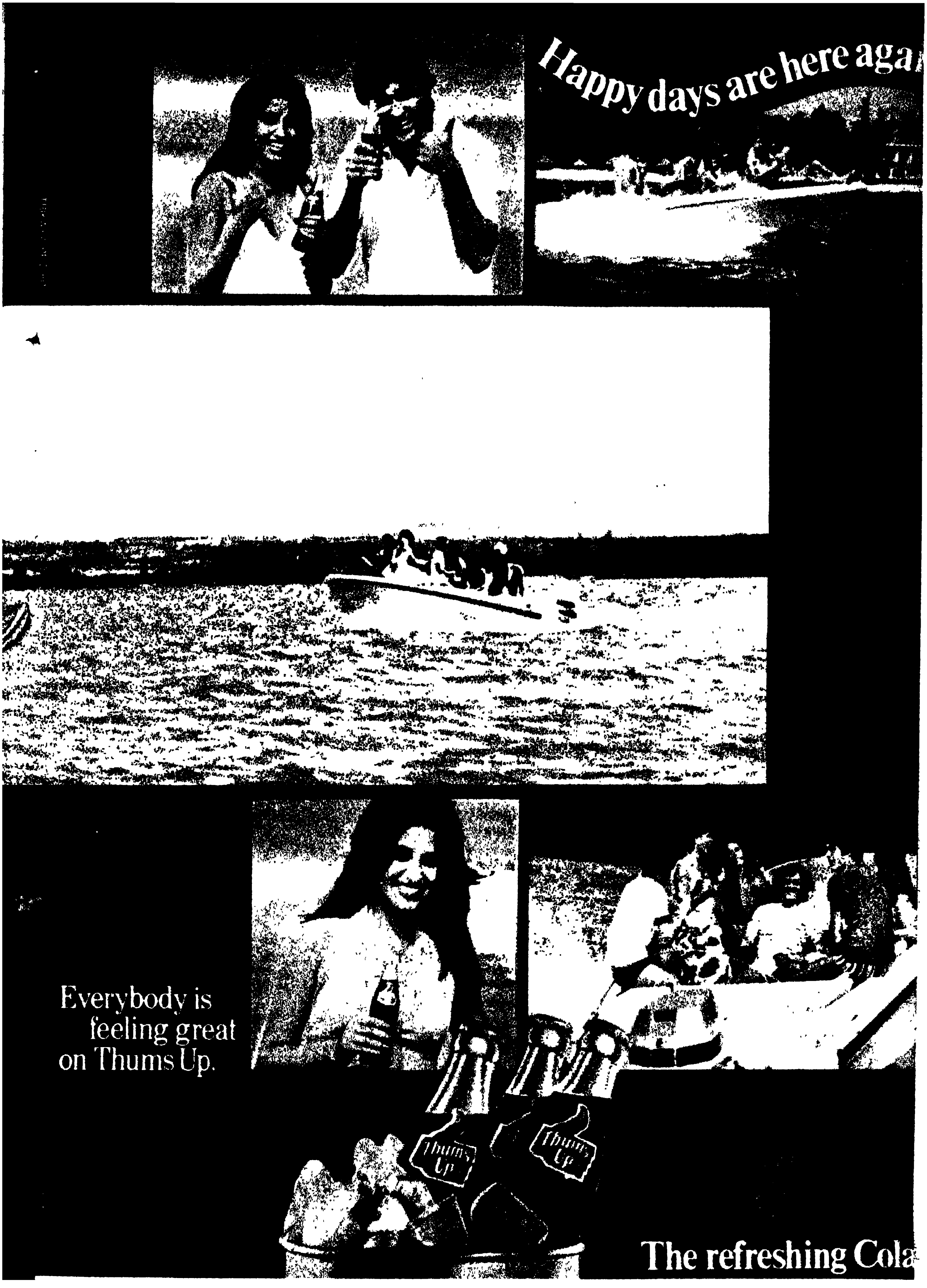
It is more than 35 years since the USA first began generating atomic waste—but not one kilo of that dangerous waste has yet been disposed off. By now, more than 76 million gallons of highly radioactive waste has been stored across the USA—and no one has a clear idea of what can be done with it.

Choice of castration

The Oklahoma House of Representatives in the USA has overwhelmingly passed a bill which gives convicted rapists and sex criminals the option of having themselves castrated in order to reduce their jail sentences. The bill is being considered by the state Senate.

Building talks

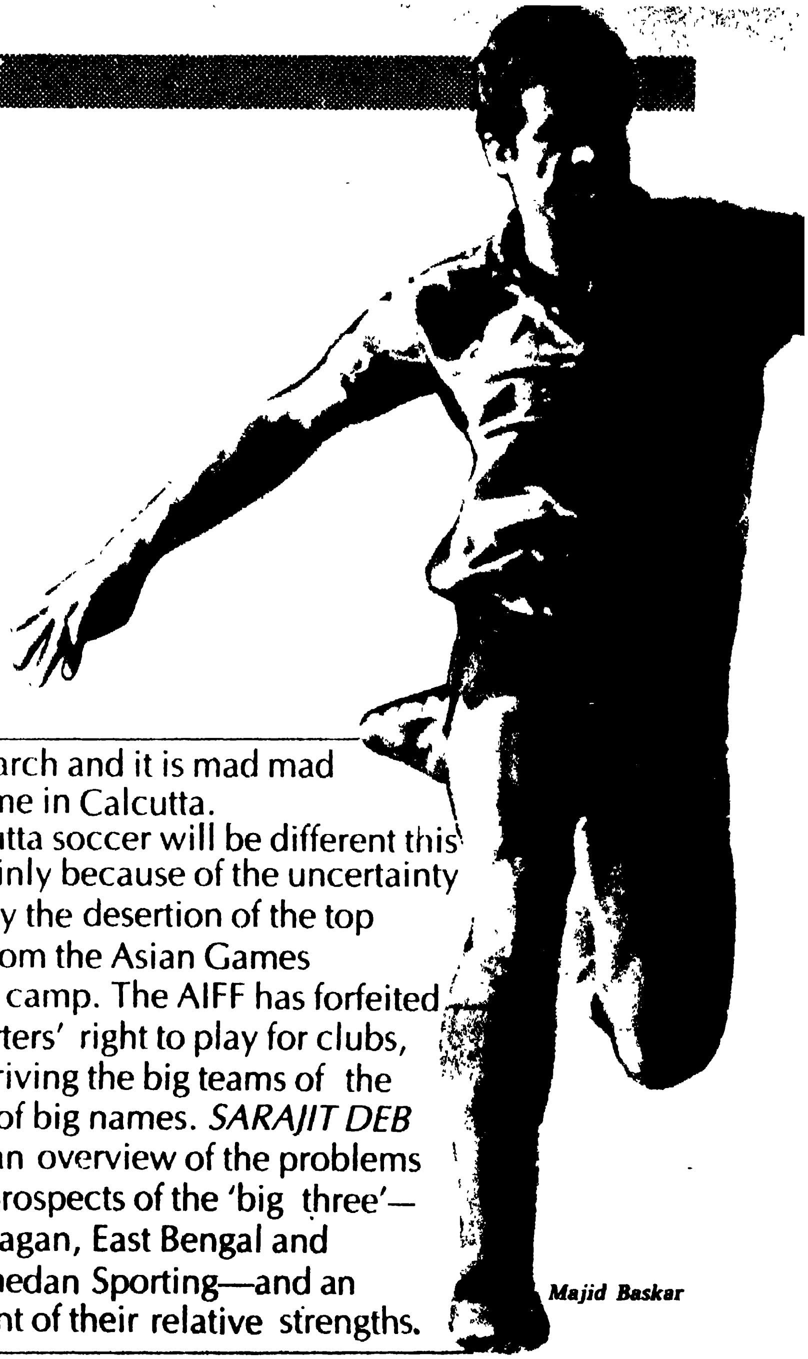
"Hello, this is the building speaking," says a 40-storey office building, now under construction at Third Avenue, 48th Street, New York. It frequently apologises to pedestrians who walk past for the mess caused as a result of its construction. The recorded voice is of an actor, amplified through loudspeakers.


Happy days are here aga
Everybody is
feeling great
on Thums Up.
Thums Up
Thums Up
The refreshing Cola

Shabbir Ali

Big Three: how will they play this year?

Come March and it is mad mad soccer time in Calcutta.
But Calcutta soccer will be different this time, mainly because of the uncertainty created by the desertion of the top players from the Asian Games coaching camp. The AIFF has forfeited the deserters' right to play for clubs, thus depriving the big teams of the services of big names. *SARAJIT DEB* presents an overview of the problems and the prospects of the 'big three'—Mohun Bagan, East Bengal and Mohammedan Sporting—and an assessment of their relative strengths.



Majid Baskar

Surajit Sengupta

Going by the number of good players, East Bengal certainly looks the strongest among the top three Calcutta soccer teams this season. Mohammedan Sporting is the next best and Mohun Bagan a poor third. But this is, at best, a very crude guide to the relative strengths of the three teams. In 1974, EastBengal had superiority over Mohan Bagan in every department of the game, and yet lost to Mohun Bagan in the Durand Cup tournament. In 1977, Mohun Bagan was a better side on paper but it was East Bengal which finished at the top of the local league table. East Bengal was the weakest among the three last year, but at the end of the session it emerged as the only side which could not be defeated by any Indian team it played against Appearances can therefore be very deceptive and guessing the outcome of the contest for supremacy among the three teams is, as always, a risky business.

East Bengal's strongest point this season is what was its weak belly last year—the linkmen. They have three very good medios now in Amalraj, Joseph Machado and Fareed. Besides, Khabbazi could be useful if needed. Amalraj came into prominence during the 1979 nationals when Gautam Sarkar was not available; Fareed was the live-wire of Andhra Pradesh in the last nationals; and Machado had been doing a good job for his club—Goa's Dempo—for quite some time. In all probability, these three players will comprise East Bengal's half-line with

Machado at the centre (his original position in Dempo). This should certainly take away much of the load that forwards Majid and Jamshed had to carry last year because of an inefficient half-line. And with that, Majid and Jamshed, who had literally kept the East Bengal flag flying last year, should be free to put in their best. They should receive good support

from C. D. Francis and Debashish Roy. Roy had a good season last year with Mohammedan Sporting, but could not play for the Bengal team in the nationals because of a knee injury. Whether he will be able to recover sufficiently to fill the void left by Harjinder Singh (who has gone back to Punjab) in the left flank is anybody's guess. But then, East Bengal can still draw on their reserves, talented youngsters Sankar Adhikari and Priti Ghoshal. And, veteran Samaresh Choudhury is capable of excelling himself whenever occasion demands.

In deep defence, Monoranjan Bhattacharya (the club's captain for this year) will be the most difficult barrier to negotiate. Sekharan and Premnath Phillip can be as difficult for the rival forwards. The fourth spot could be filled in by any of the four players: Anudeb Das, Thomas Mathews, Dilip Palit, and the old horse Sudhir Karmakar. East Bengal has lost two of its reliable defence men: Samar Bhattacharya and Satyajit Mitra (last year's captain). But they may not be missed as their replacements are equally competent. And for the all-important man under the bar, East Bengal has three persons to choose from: Gopabandhu Sahoo, Dilip Paul and Biswajit Das. Gopabandhu, playing for Orissa in the last nationals, performed quite creditably although he tends to be a bit of a show-off and unnecessarily acrobatic. Dilip Paul who was taken as the second goalkeeper by East Bengal last year, impressed the club officials with his performance following successive failures of the first goalkeeper Nasir Ahmed. Biswajit was Bengal's goalkeeper in the 1976 nationals and it was because of his outstanding performance that Bengal could win the final against Maharashtra. But he came under a cloud when, playing for Mohun Bagan the next year, he conceded two goals to East Bengal. It was rumoured that he had been bribed, as a result of which he had to remain content with playing for smaller clubs in the following years.

Mohammedan Sporting's strong point is its forward line. If Md Akbar, Shabbir Ali, Bidesh Bose and Manash Bhattacharya strike form together they can demolish any defence. But the big question is, will they? Manash

Prasanta Banerjee

JAYANTA SETT

The line-up

MOHAMMEDAN SPORTING

1980

Bhaskar Ganguly, Santosh Bose, Md. Mukim; Chinmoy Chatterjee, Moidul Islam, Gauranga Banerjee, Romen Bhattacharya, Premnath Philip, Shyamal Ghosh; Pem Dorji, Amalraj, Prasanta Banerjee, Samaresh Choudhury; Surajit Sengupta, Md. Akbar, Shabbir Ali, David Williams, Dinakar, Mir Sajjad, Denis Williamson, Debashis Roy, Amit Bagchi.

1981

IN: Amit Guha (*from East Bengal*),Sheikh Akhtaruddin (*from Rajasthan*), Balai Mukherjee (*from Aryan*), Samir Mukherjee (*from Aryan*), Samiran Saha (*from Aryan*), Kajal Chatterjee (*from East Bengal*), Ashok Chatterjee (*from George Telegraph*), Aloke Mukherjee (*from George Telegraph*), Sibnath Barui (*from Rajasthan*), Prasun Banerjee (*from Mohun Bagan*), Tapan Das (*from East Bengal*), Nirmal Chatterjee (*from Aryan*), Kartick Sett (*from Rajasthan*), Uttam Majumdar (*from Kidderpore)*, Manash Bhattacharya (*from Mohun Bagan*), Bidesh Bose (*from Mohun Bagan*), Ranjit Mukherjee (*from Mohun Bagan*).
OUT: Santosh Bose (*to Railway FC*), Md. Mukim (*to Wari*), Premnath Philip (*to East Bengal*), Shyamal Ghosh (*to Rajasthan)*,Prem Dorji (*to WIFA)*, Amalraj (*to East Bengal*), Samaresh Choudhury (*to East Bengal*), Surajit Sengupta (*to Mohun Bagan*). Dinkar (*to Kerala*), Mir Sajjad (*to Andhra Pradesh*). Debashis Roy (*to East Bengal*), Amit Bagchi (*to Rajasthan*)
RETAINED: The rest of 1980 team

EAST BENGAL

1980

Nasir Ahmad, Amit Guha, Dilip Paul, Monoranjan Bhattacharya, Sudhir Karmakar, Dilip Palit, Thomas Mathews, Samar Bhattacharya, Satyajit Mitra, Abani Aich; Kajal Chatterjee, Sumit Bagchi, Mahmud Khabazi, Somenath Banerjee, Subhas Roy, Bibhas Sarkar, Tapan Das, Latifuddin, Najeeb, Harjinder Singh, Md. Habib, Shujat, Majid Bashkar, Jamshid Nassiri

1981

IN: Biswajit Das (*from Rajasthan*), Goopabandhu Sahoo (*from Orissa*), Sankar Saha (*from George Telegraph*), Premnath Philip (*from Mohammedan Sporting*), Sekharan (*from Karnataka*), Anudeb Das (*from BNR*), Joseph Machado (from Goa), Fareed (*from Andhra Pradesh*), Amalraj (*from Mohammedan Sporting*), Sankar Adhikari,*(from Aryan)* , Moti Singh (*from Aryan*), Priti Ghoshal (*from Rajasthan)*, Debashis Roy (*from Mohammedan Sporting*), C D. Francis (*from Kerala*), Md. Mujibullah (*from Kumartulli*), Samaresh Choudhury (*from Mohammedan Sporting*)
OUT: Nasir Ahmad (*to Rajasthan*), Amit Guha (*to Mohammedan Sporting*), Samar Bhattacharya (*to Mohun Bagan*), Satyajit Mitra (*to Mohun Bagan*), Abani Aich (*toBhratn Sangha)*,Kajal Chatterjee (*to Mohammedan Sporting*), Sumit Bagchi (*to Rajasthan*), Tapan Das (*to Mobammedan Sporting*), Latifuddin (*to Andhra Pradesh*), Najeeb (*to Maharashtra*), Harjinder Singh (*to Punjab*), Shujat *(to Maharashtra)* *Subhas Roy (to Rajasthan), Bibhas Sarkar (to George Telegraph*).
RETAINED: The rest of 1980 team

MOHUN BAGAN

1980

Pratap Ghosh, Shivaji Banerjee, Jagadish Ghosh, Sanjib Choudhury, Ashok Chakravarty, Subrata Bhattacharya, Pradip Choudhury, Compton Dutta, Shyamal Banerjee; Gautam Sarkar, Prasun Banerjee; Manash Bhattacharya, Bidesh Bose, Ulganathan, Munish Manna, Xavier Pius, Shyam Thapa, Mihir Bose, Francis D'Souza, Ranjit Mukherjee, Kesto Mitra.

1981:

IN: Satyajit Mitra (*from East Bengal*), Sudip Chatterjee (*from BNR*), Biswajit Bose (*from Aryan*), Gautam Bhattacharya (*from Maharashtra*), Samar Bhattacharya (*from East Bengal*); S K Bera (*from Railways*), Md Habib (*from East Bengal*). Dipak Banerjee (*from Aryan*); Surajit Sengupta (*from Mohammedan Sporting*), Arup Das (*from Railway FC*), Biswajit Bhattacharya (*from Aryan*)
OUT: Prasun Banerjee *(to Mohammedan Sporting)*, Manash Bhattacharya (*to Mohammedan Sporting)*, Bidesh Bose (*to Mohammedan Sporting*), Ranjit Mukherjee (*to Mohammedan Sporting*)
RETAINED: The rest of 1980 team

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might turn out to be less penetrative without Gautam Sarkar in the half-line to feed him. Apart from that, with both Mohammedan linkmen Prasanta Banerjee and Prasun Banerjee being left-footed the team's attack is likely to be concentrated more through the left flank, offering fewer opportunities to right-winger Manash to score. That way Bidesh may be in a much happier position than Manash. The chink in the armour, however, is the half-line. Both Prasun (who has come in place of Amalraj) and Prasanta are attacking halves but they are not as good at snatching. This can be a serious deficiency. Otherwise, the defence looks fairly sound with last year's custodian Bhaskar Ganguly remaining under the bar and Romen Bhattacharya and Moidul Islam as the stoppers once again. To their right and left would be Gauranga Banerjee and a dependable Chinmoy Chatterjee respectively. If this combination does not work, the club has a reserve of ten young and promising players to see the team through.

IN comparison, Mohun Bagan wears a shattered look. With three top players—who had been the mainstay of the team for the last few years—walking away, the club now depends mainly on the younger players it has recruited for retaining its supremacy this season. In the forward-line it will certainly have Surajit Sengupta and Ulganathan; the choice of the striker will be between Shyam Thapa, Xavier Pius, Biswajit Bhattacharya, Francis D'Souza. Of these, Surajit, Ulaga and Shyam are certainly past their prime. The half-line too is equally uncertain. Over the last four years Mohun Bagan's forte had been its half-line. It was from here that most of its winning moves originated with Gautam Sarkar and Prasun Banerjee harassing their rivals all the time. Prasun's exit would certainly impair that rhythm, and had Mohun Bagan known in advance that Prasun would be leaving, they would have certainly gone for Prasanta Banerjee who had been looking for an opening in Mohun Bagan since 1976. Gautam will now have to depend on either of the three: the never-say-die professional Md Habib, the promising Dipak Banerjee, or S. K. Bera who had done well for the Railways in the last nationals.

However, the greatest problem the team faces is in organising its deep defence. It has recruited eleven players to fill in four spots. This itself is an evidence of the club's worries. Of them only one—Subrata Bhattacharya—can be sure of a berth. Its plus point however is that with such a large number of players to choose from it is always possible to strike a rich combination which is what Mohun Bagan is banking-upon for its defence. As for the last line of defence—the goalkeeper—Mohun Bagan has been able to retain all the three, Shivaji Banerjee, Pratap Ghosh, and Jagadish Ghosh, who had served the club during the last season. ■

Photographs: NIKHIL BHATTACHARYA

The ups and downs

Habib

Md Habib, the winger-turned-striker from Hyderabad had almost decided to retire and finally go back home. Although he performed well for East Bengal during the last soccer season, the club would not have him in the team for this season. The reason: he was not among those called to the coaching camp preparing the national soccer squad for the Delhi Asiad . To the big clubs, this was the final confirmation of what the talent-hounds of the *maidan* had been claiming since 1977: Habib is finished. So, none of the top teams was interested. But the desertion of soccer probables from the coaching camp brought an unexpected windfall to Habib. In a fit of patriotism (or convenience?), Mohan Bagan's secretary having declined to accommodate the camp-deserters in his team suddenly found himself in an unenviable position. The problem was how to make a team without the camp-deserters (who were among the best in the country) and yet remain in the front of Calcutta soccer. This led the club to turn to experienced camp rejects of whom Habib was one. This way Habib got a fresh lease of soccer life—that too without asking for it. Years ago Habib had taken a vow: he would never beg to play. He was able to keep it eventually, thanks to the camp-desertions.

One other player to benefit from the mess is winger Ulganathan who had played for Mohun Bagan during the last season and as a replacement for the club regular Bidesh Bose, did a splendid job in the Rovers cup tournament. When he learnt that Mohun Bagan would not have him in the team for this season he approached Manoranjan Bhattacharya (who is East Bengal captain this year) with a desperate appeal to get him a berth in East Bengal. Monoranjan pleaded for Ulganathan with the club officials, without much success. Just as Ulganathan was going to switch over to a middle-order club, Rajasthan, came the good news: Mohun Bagan would like to retain him.

If fortune had favoured these players following the camp-desertion episode it also brought in miseries for many. Full-back Samar Bhattacharya is one of the losers. Shortly after he had joined the coaching camp rumours spread that he would probably switch over from his East Bengal to Mohun Bagan for the current season. That sent East Bengal officials scurrying to Salt Lake—the site for the coaching camp. Through its loyalists smuggled inside the camp the club started offering all sorts of carrots to Samar, keeping him all the time under strict surveillance to prevent the Mohun Bagan officials getting anywhere near him. Even coach P. K. Banerjee was approached to put in some good words for East Bengal to the player. But when Samar finally deserted the camp East Bengal suddenly seemed to have lost all interest in him, presumably because of initial uncertainty about the future of the camp-deserters. Finally, on the last date for the inter-club transfers, Samar signed for Mohun Bagan.

At the end East Bengal, of course, profited most from the camp-desertion. They have in their team all the seven deserters who have decided to stay out of the camp even after they had been offered reprieve by the All-India Football Federation (AIFF). That only proves the club's skill for 'managing' the players. Indeed, since the day the coaching camp had been inaugurated in Calcutta on 6 February the two main rivals of Calcutta soccer—Mohun Bagan and East Bengal—had been fighting for the best available soccer talent in the country. So fierce has been the war that both the teams had gone to the extent of even planting their men in the camp. In this they had an edge over their other rival—Mohammeden Sporting—who, instead of concentrating on the camp for the players, went after the Iranian stars—Jamshed and Majid. But for these two players, it would have been difficult for East Bengal to be anywhere near the top in the last season. Mohammedan was hoping Khabaji, another Iranian player who played for the club in 1979, would somehow be able to rope in his fellow Iranians for the team. Only after Khabaji had failed Mohammedan looked the other way. Goalkeeper Bhaskar Ganguly (one of the camp-deserters who assisted the club in 1980) was offered better terms if he continued. So was back Chinmoy Chatterjee. Two other players, forward Tapan Das and linkman Kajal Chatterjee were 'bought' at a price higher than what they hoped to fetch. Both had indeed reconciled to playing for a second or third rate club.

Samar

Calcutta returns to violence

The Congress(I) takes on the Left Front

Calcutta: The season of shadow boxing is over; the Big Fight has clearly begun. The Congress(I) in West Bengal, nudged by Delhi, has gone to the streets in its efforts to destabilise and defame the Left Front government headed by the CPI(M)—but whether in the process it is only hurting itself remains to be seen. Nor is it certain whether the recent troubles in Calcutta are the familiar prelude to the dismissal of the state government. On 6 April in Kashmir, Mrs Gandhi did say that she was not interested in toppling any non-Congress(I) government in any state, but who can be certain? Certainly the leftists are not certain. In any case, the time for civilities is over: bombs, processions, *bandhs*, arson and political murder are returning to Calcutta after a long hibernation.

Conventional wisdom in the speculation prone city of Calcutta has held that Mrs Gandhi would not allow the CPI(M) dominated government to conduct next Assembly elections, scheduled for the middle of next year. The big question is how much before the end of their full term would the Left Front government be dismissed. The answer may or may not be available at the PM's house, but the Congress(I) here has begun its preparations for the poll. The countdown began with the nomination of a reasonably "pedigreed" leader, Ashok Sen. Old warrior Siddhartha Ray swallowed a humiliating bait in Delhi but still found himself out in the cold; he made his obeisances to Mrs Gandhi in an effort to become the Congress(I) choice for the next CM, but in the end got nothing for his gestures. 28 March must have been a specially galling day for him. Word had been spread that he would meet Mrs Gandhi that day, and some uncharitable observers said that Mr Ray's personal assistant waited just beside the phone the whole day to take the glad news of a summons from the PM. There was no meeting; the PM was busy. Mr Ray got the message; he publicly called Mr Sen his guru, and told a cynical press that he was no longer interested in being CM, he had done that job for six and a half years, and he didn't fancy it anymore.

On 30 March, the Congress(I) provoked a confrontation by holding a protest rally which was to culminate in a siege of the Assembly (which lies in the very heart of the city). The top brass of the Congress(I) (Mr Ajit Panja, Mr Bhola Sen, Mr Subrata Mukherjee—they had agreed to forget their volatile differences for a while) were there, but the place of honour went to the veteran lawyer Mr Ashok Sen. As per the programme, the leaders and a number of workers courted arrest after the speeches. But by 3.30 a police-demonstrators confrontation had built up, and the police reply to stones quickly escalated from teargas to bullets. The deputy commissioner (central) of police, who was directing operations, got hit on the head, and ordered his men to open fire. Three young men died. One got a bullet between the eyes, from virtually point-blank range; and a second was shot in the back. The third was the saddest case: he was an innocent waiting for his stuck tramcar to move when a stray bullet ended his life. The trouble continued till early evening; and once again public transport was a major victim.

Police carrying one of those shot dead

Police in action during the Congress(I) demonstration

The mourning for the three dead was organised by the Congress(I) of course, and they called a "symbolic" *bandh* on Friday 3 April. The Left Front decided to oppose the *bandh*. Inevitable result: violence. At least eleven young men died this day.

More interesting was the CPI(M) response to the *bandh* violence. It put on display all the damaged buses and tramcars in the centre of the city—thus showing the people that this was what the Congress(I) had done to make life in Calcutta more difficult for the commuter—and everyone is a commuter in this city. On the evening of 6 April they took out a massive silent procession to mourn the "martyrs" who died in the cause of the Left Front.

The arena now shifts to Delhi. Indeed, the Congress(I) leaders could all be seen boarding the Delhi flights, particularly on Sunday evening (Mr Ashok Sen, for some reason, was wearing ten gold-capped pens in his pocket—perhaps he needed them all to describe the "villainy" of the Left Front). They were armed with photographs of "CPI(M) *goondaism.*" Time—perhaps a very short time—will tell whether Mrs Indira Gandhi is sufficiently converted by these pictures—or sufficiently confident of her own party's abilities in the state—to dismiss the Left Front government and call for fresh election under governor's rule.

SHANKAR GUHA NIYOGI

"We shall continue our activities against exploitation"

Bhopal: Shankar Guha Niyogi, the organising secretary of the Chhattisgarh Shramik Sangh of the Rajahara Iron Ore mines of Bhilai was arrested on 11 February under the NSA (*Sunday*, 22 March). M. V. Kher met him after his release from jail. Mr Guha Niyogi's arrest was disapproved by the review board of the Madhya Pradesh High Court. Excerpts from the interview:

Q: What was the main cause of your arrest?

A: I was arrested because of party politics of the Madhya Pradesh minister for industries, Jhumuk Lal Bhedia. In this state, ministers are now not only anti-social elements themselves, but they have ganged up with other anti-social elements like liquor contractors and other anti-social elements...In the Rajahara mines and rural areas, I had launched an anti-liquor campaign and about 25,000 labourers and kisans stopped drinking. This hit the liquor contractors of Rajahara financially and since he (the liquor contractor) was the financier of Bhedia, Bhedia later acted against me.

Q: There have been allegations that the activities of your union have been violent...

A: This is a lie. Even Jhumuk Lal Bhedia had, in his statement before the Razzak Commission (which probed into the firing of June 1977), stated that our activities have always been peaceful. The firing against our workers was a conspiracy of the then collector of Durg, Rameshchandra Saxena and contractors...The government had appointed the Razzak Commission to probe into the firing of Rajahara on 2 and 3 June 1977 (in which) 11 lives (had been lost). The government has not received the report of the commission yet, and yet, in the charge-sheet, they held me guilty for the firing, too.

Q: You have also been charged with joining hands with former union minister Vidya Charan Shukla and meeting him to work out a strategy against Bhedia.

A: I did meet V. C. Shukla at his residence in Raipur. The government had curtailed the diesel quota of non-Bhilai steel plant parties working in Rajahara from two lakh litres to one lakh litres. This resulted in unemployment. Therefore, I met Shukla, then minister of civil supplies, during his visit to Raipur, and presented a memorandum to him to restore the diesel quota. Mr Shukla was sympathetic but I have never looked towards him for support to the labourers .

Q: What are your future plans?

A: My release is a victory for the press, for the Lok Dal, the BJP and organisations like the People's Union for Civil Liberties and democratic rights. We shall continue our trade union activities against the exploitation of labourers by contractors and the bureaucracy. We shall continue our movement against liquor, gambling, *satta* and other anti-social elements. We are not attached to any political party or organisation, but we have decided to back all those organisations who would fight against the NSA.

Q: Were you ill-treated in jail?

A: No one ill-treated me. I was put in a cell under government instructions

'Reservation for a hundred years'

Pune: "How can the sudras, who for five millenia were denied any kind of education, compete with the upper castes?" asked Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. He was speaking about the anti-reservation stir in Gujarat. Bhagwan asserted that the "sudras" (he meant the harijans, etc) were entitled to the reservation of jobs and places in the university for at least a hundred years because they had been oppressed and exploited by the brahmins for over five thousand years. It was true that the agitation had been started on the grounds that everyone had equal rights in a free and democratic country and that the oppressed classes should compete with everyone on the basis of merit. But, said the Bhagwan, the oppressed classes could not compete or even win in the race for equality.

Bhagwan warned the "Fire (of oppression) is spreading; it has already reached Rajasthan and soon it will reach Madhya Pradesh. Once it reaches Bihar the country will be ruined . this conflagration is bound to spread. It is not going to stop, and it is the brahmins who are behind the whole movement For five thousand years the brahmins have been dominating this country and even now they are not ready to relent "

MEGHALAYA

Will Lyngdoh keep his word?

B. B. Lyngdoh

W. A. Sangma

Shillong: Meghalaya is poised to witness a unique political event on 7 May: the swapping of positions between the CM Brington Buhai Lyngdoh and chairman of the state planning board and former CM Williamson A. Sangma. Lyngdoh's exit is being staged to honour a "gentleman's agreement" signed on exactly the same day two years ago among the three major constituents of the present ruling coalition, United Meghalaya Parliamentary Democratic Front (UMPDF). The agreement enjoins on Lyngdoh, the leader of the breakaway faction of the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC), to give way to Sangma, the leader of the main coalition partner, the Congress(I), on completion of the two year term But, the transition may not be smooth as Lyngdoh may try his best to retain his chair.

The first signs of this were evident when a move to unite the two factions of the APHLC was made at a two-day plenary session of the opposition APHLC at Shillong on 17-18 April It was here that P. R. Kyndiah, leader of the opposition APHLC in the Legislative Assembly, called for a "desired unity" between the two factions. Said Kyndiah: "There has of late been a lot of concensus between the APHLC factions on key regional issues, both inside and outside the Assembly. So, if there is concensus on so many issues, why not formalise the friendship?"

For the APHLC, both the ruling and the opposition factions, the need to unite is obvious. With the 1983 polls approaching, a truncated APHLC would fetch far less votes than a united one, especially as the Hill States People's Democratic Party (HSPDP), the third major constituent of the ruling UMPDF, has improved its position in the west Khasi hills. Besides, a united APHLC with the support of the HSPDP would enable Lyngdoh to bypass the agreement and stay on as CM by virtue of being the leader of the majority party

But Lyngdoh told *Sunday:* "The reunification will have no bearing on the ministry." Lyngdoh has his reasons. He can hardly afford to part company with the Congress(I) now as Capt Sangma enjoys the support of the people of the Garo hills, which return 24 members to the Assembly. Besides, ex-CM D. D. Pugh, a leader of the opposition APHLC, insists on a precondition: that Lyngdoh should pull out of the UMPDF, along with his party before the two factions of the APHLC unite. This Lyngdoh is not willing to do. Nor is the HSPDP willing to join hands with the APHLC in a broad-based regional party. The party leader, Hopingstone Lyngdoh and deputy CM S. D Khongwir have made known their willingness to stay on with the Congress(I) in a broadbased coalition

But Sangma is confident that there will not be any problem during the change of chief ministers As he said: "I did not visualise any last minute problems over the changeover What is being said about problems developing at the last minute is totally untrue."

Santanu Ghosh

USA

Confessions of a Congressman's ex-wife

Washington D. C.: Four months ago, Rita Jenrette, estranged wife of a former Congressman, John Jenrette, bared her soul. Last month she decided to bare her corporeal. Although Rita said little in her article, *The Liberation of a Congressional Wife*, in the April issue of the *Playboy*, which she did not say in her earlier article, *Diary of a Mad Congressman*, in the *Washington Post Magazine* on 7 December, the storm that broke lose had America quivering.

A troupe of Congressional wives went on TV on all the major networks to restore their scarred images. It was a difficult effort. Had Rita kept on the bikini at least the vitals would have been protected As it was, Rita decided to bare all.

Why did Rita commit the cardinal sin: Thou shalt not blow the whistle? Rita had an answer in the *Washington Post*, “I'm fed up with people trying to paint me as a dumb blonde and a gold digger because I am an attractive young woman who happened to marry a Congressman.” She also wanted, she said to “exorcise the last political demon from my life”

Rita may not have succeeded in tainting any Congressional wife, wearing tailored gabardine suits and sensible plumps, with their hair shaped into sculptured coiffures worn by matrons, blue. But she did leave many, many indigo tinged people around.

Much of Rita's *Playboy*'s “no-hold-barred story” which the editors said started “where her *Washington Post* piece left off,” was in fact, a rehash of the *Post* story.

The story of the Congressional wife began one August 1975 when the 25-year-old Texan girl was courted by one of the most eligible Congressmen in Washington, John Jenrette, a rising political star, tipped for speakership. (John has recently been divorced by his first wife on the grounds of adultery, in which Rita alleges 23 correspondents had been listed.)

The surprising thing about the courtship, although Rita does not say so, is that although the Republican National Committee, with whom she was employed, was aware that she was shacking up with a Congressman, no outrage was felt. They did fire her, but only because she chose to shack up with a Democrat.

Their marriage in 1976, after he proposed to her during the 1976 Democratic National Convention made national headlines. “Romeo and Juliet Amid Big Time Politics,” lead *People*'s magazine.

One year later, Rita says, “I was forced to face up to the fact that my husband was doing his share of chasing (girls) and that he had a serious drinking problem.” Rita should have known. John chased her after all. In fact the most sensational of all episodes revealed by her occured when she was not a Congressional wife but a Congressional mistress.

One night, while she was being courted by what she calls an “irrepresible hustler named John Jenrette,” and the “House was in an all-night session, he called me to say he missed me and had to see me. I threw on a coat and walked up to the Capitol portico where John was waiting. He took my hand and led me into the shadows, and we made love on the marble steps that overlook the monuments and city below.”

Much of Rita's ‘expose’ is quibbling over the demands made by John's constituents who “think his Congressman's home doubles as a Washington motel.” She learned that a Congressman's wife was a barbie doll. But, she also learned more.

Like the time she caught her husband in the arms of a woman, “old enough to be his mother,” and decided to divorce him. She was talked out of the divorce by John's friends who were afraid a second divorce could ruin his political career.

“I had learned in my first year as a Congressional wife that a Congressman's first priority was to consider the political consequences of any unpleasant occurrence. His marriage, his integrity, even his voting record, seemed to take a back seat to the primary concern of staying in office. ...Sex and alcohol became a convenient pit stop on the Congressional fast track.”

Although much of Rita's story details her family problems in coping with a wayward husband, she has some startling revelations as well: Sandy Island is a refuge for men who dupe their wives into believing they are going fishing while they shack up with girlfriends in cabins instead.Invited to a townhouse of a legislative aide, who had a “reputation for wild sex parties on Capitol Hill”, she was duped into drinking. The host held her down and pushed a capsule of amyl nitrate, a drug used as an aphrodisiac, under her nose. She struggled free and managed to drag her passed out husband with her.

A close friend, whom Rita identified as a bright woman,said her husband was a cocaine and massage parlor addict. He had once invited out-call massage girls to his home and asked his wife to join in the fun.

Two Congressional marriages were on the rocks. One wife was planning a divorce because her husband cheated on her, while another indulged in sex orgies even with her husband. The Darlington Moose Lodge, a famous Florida holiday home held wild parties in which members paraded the room with antlers on their head.

During one official trip, a governor tried to seduce her, running his hand

“I know people will be critical of my posing. .thats their problem.” Rita in Playboy

Rita Jenrette poses for Playboy

up her leg and even making his way into her bathroom.

Another startling revelation by Rita is that after her husband was indicted in the ABSCAM scandal for accepting bribes, he and an international arms merchant, Frank Terpil, conspired to mediate through Ugandan ex-dictator Idi Amin with Ayatollah Khomeini for the release of the hostages, in exchange of being let off the hook.

Rita also imputes that junior staffers sometimes serve as mistresses for politicians. One politician even kept a mistress on his payroll. At one Capitol Hill reception honouring nurses, Rita says, she saw a nurse pressing her hotel key into her husband's hand mistaking her for a mistress or a secretary. Rita claims that lobbyists plied Congressmen with liquor and then set them up with women.

Rita mentions no names, but her barbs at Congressmen are sweeping. "I know that Congress is a world of thirsts that can't be quenched. The drug habits, the drinking problems, the mistresses, the boyfriends, the broken homes attest to that."

What has Rita hoped to accomplish? Revenge for one thing. "During my five years as a Congressional wife, everyone else made much of my looks. Now it's my turn." But her words have not been the last on the subject. Rita is currently working on a book. Soon after her article appeared in the *Washington Post*, bumper stickers with the words 'Rita and John who?' invaded Horry County. One disc jockey even recorded an *Ode to Rita:* "You think you're so pretty and you think you've so much class, but Rita, you ain't nothing but a pain in the ..."

Nothing that Rita has chosen to reveal is, by Washington standards truly startling. Infact, she says, she has been a 'model of discretion.' More shocking scandals have hit Capitol Hill, the latest being the beguiling seductress Paula Parkinson, who has decided to go public with her memoirs on her sexcapades with some of America's biggest names. And her husband has disclosed that videotapes of her encounters with three Republican Congressmen exist.

Indeed the ABSCAM tapes themselves disclosed more starling testimony. And through Hollywood, blockbusting novels and the muckrakers of the sensational press, the American public has been innurred to the SEXSCAM that is Washington. And a convicted San Francisco madam, Brandy Baldwin is scheduled to appear on NBC TV in May scarring top aides and cabinet members in the Nixon administration.

What then makes Rita's story unique? And why the uproar? The answer is that Rita is, or atleast was, until a month ago when she divorced John Jenrette, a Congressional wife. Her unique status gave currency to rumour, legitimacy to gossip, credibility to innuendo. The mass media stripped the costume party that is the Congress, to the bikini. But the bikini also hides. Now Rita has stripped even that, and no Congressman is above suspicion. For Caesar's wife has confessed.

Achal Mehra

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FORD FOUNDATION

No, thank you, says a Devi

Calcutta: "Just say 'yes' and I'll do the rest." That was Bhabani Sengupta alias Chanakya Sen, the noted Bengali novelist and leftist political commentator to Mahashweta Devi, a militant Bengali author who won the 1979 Sahitya Academy Award for her novel *Araneyyer Adhikar* based on the theme of tribal uprising in Bengal.Mr Sengupta had gone to Mahashweta Devi one July evening at her residence on Ballygunge Station Road in 1979. "We were having a very casual conversation," recalls Mahashweta Devi. "Suddenly he tried to sell the idea that I would be much better off if I opted for a Ford Foundation grant." Without even giving it a second thought, she bluntly turned down his proposal with a "thanks, but no thanks." She told him, "The question of taking a grant from America doesn't arise since America, directly or indirectly, exploits India." But Mr Sengupta insisted. "So," recalls Mahashweta Devi, "I asked him, 'how can you be so sure that I would be Ford Foundation's choice?' Did he, by any chance, represent Ford Foundation?" Mr Sengupta promptly replied that if he recommended her, the foundation would certainly listen to him.

Mahasweta Devi

Mahashweta Devi thought that that was the end of it. But, a month later, she received a letter from Mr Robert Goheen, US ambassador to India, inviting her to a month-long cultural trip to the USA. She turned down the invitation. When Mr Sengupta heard this, he wrote a letter to the novelist reminding her that she needed money to carry on with her work among the tribals, besides, she had worked very hard in the past and needed some respite. In March this year, he wrote her another letter saying that, on his recommendation, Ford Foundation had sent the necessary papers for the grant. These papers were enclosed with Mr Sengupta's letter. As was expected, she turned down the offer. Mahashweta Devi became the centre of controversy when her decision was reported by a Calcutta daily. And then Mr Sengupta, in a letter to the editor of *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, denied his alleged part in the grant episode. He claimed that he was a nobody in the selection procedure of the Ford Foundation grant and pointed to the clause in the foundation's papers which states that selection is made by a panel of writers.

"I have always been saying that I am against accepting big money," Mahashweta Devi says in defence of her decision. What she is not clear about is Mr Sengupta's interest in the whole affair: "That is what surprises me the most." According to her, Mr Sengupta professes to be left-oriented but has no qualms about accepting foreign money; he has received a number of foreign scholarships and frequently travels abroad. That is why, she claims, he cannot appreciate her decision to turn down the Ford Foundation grant. She is not unduly perturbed by his recent volte face: "I made a blunder in not preserving his first letter to me; I tore it up. But, even if he denies having written anything or said anything to me that evening in July 1979, it doesn't really matter. He is sufficiently exposed."

If her left-orientation is far more genuine than Mr Sengupta's,how does she explain her decision to accept the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979? Doesn't the Indian government exploit its people, "directly or indirectly"? To this she replies: "I accepted the Sahitya Akademi Award because it meant a lot to me and the tribals who were the subject of my award-winning novel. These people have been neglected for centuries and when they saw that someone who had written about them had been recognised, it was a moment of ecstasy for them."

Malabika Bhattacharya

FARMERS' DEMANDS

No entry for officials

Bangalore: "*Sarakari, sahakari mattu bank adhikarigalu raitara appane illade praveshisakookdadu* (Government, cooperative and bank officials should not enter without the permission of the farmers.)" These words are neatly printed on eye-catching green hoardings at the entrance of Holaluru village in Shimoga district, the rice bowl of Karnataka. The same words are repeated on about 200 hoardings in the villages of the district.

This defiance of the farmers has been prompted by the failure of talks between ryot leaders and the government. The farmers have been angered over the government's stubborn attitude of not trying to understand their problems. Since the administration cannot understand their problems they are determined to solve it themselves. Among the many problems they have, one is the repayment of loans. The farmers cannot repay the loans, they say, because they do not have the money. Their only way out: stop the government, bank and cooperative officials from entering the villages.

The hoardings have been put up since October 1980. Strangely enough, this ban has worked. According to Mr S V Bhadrappa, treasurer of the State Ryot Sangha, no officials have dared visit the villages. The boards also display the farmers' 19-point charter of demands which include abolition of betterment levy, water tax and agricultural income tax, fixation of prices of agricultural produce on a more scientific basis, introduction of farm insurance throughout the state without collecting premiums from farmers and provision of all facilities to farmers.

Louise Fernandes

Prince Charles is a socialist

London: The latest luminary to join the "small is beautiful" cause is not another friend of George Fernandes but none other than Britain's Prince Charles himself. In fact, he has just written an article on this subject in *The Observer*, and he often sounds like a socialist. We quote:

"How will we approach what we call 'our commitment to the Third World' in a situation where growth inevitably seems to widen the gap between the developed and developing countries; where the costs of new technology are so high that developing countries cannot afford to buy it, let alone operate and maintain it?"

The Prince has also taken a few lessons from his recent visit to our country. He writes: "During my visit to India before Christmas I was struck by the contrast between the material poverty of the vast majority of its people, living on the land, and the fact that it boasts some of the most up-to-date industrial concerns you will find anywhere. There is very little in-between the two extremes—very little of what Dr Fritz Schumacher called 'intermediate technology,' although I know determined efforts are being made by a number of groups in India to fill this gap. In fact it was in India that Dr Schumacher first developed this concept, which caught the public imagination when he published his book...He saw the need for new techniques which would help people to become more productive and overcome their poverty, but which would be much simpler, cheaper and easier to maintain than the highly sophisticated equipment used in industrialised countries."

GOOD NEWS

Villagers defend themselves

Not all the villagers in Madhya Pradesh have turned helpless in the face of renewed attacks by dacoits. There is one village, Dhaumayee, in the Raun area of Bhind district, where the villagers have decided to organise themselves and face the dacoit menace with equal force. But they have not turned to the government for help—they have decided to tackle the situation themselves, after having vowed that they would rather fight to the last man than let the dacoits enter the village. As a first step, every male villager is getting training in shooting—from the affluent *thakur* to the poor harijan.

DHARMVIR JAVNER

An armed villager of Dhaumayee

The first opportunity for defending themselves came on the night of 26-27 January, when about 30 to 40 villagers stood in arms against the gang of dacoit Mania Mahavir. As soon as word got around that the village was being attacked, the villagers did not run away in fear. Instead, armed with rifles and clubs, they taught the dacoits a lesson. They not only chased the dacoits away, but also shot four of them. This, in spite of the fact that the 25 dacoits who had come were all armed with 303 rifles. When this reporter visited the village in February, a villager said. "We have decided that we shall not allow dacoits to enter the village ever again. This gang has threatened us, but we villagers always stay together, in groups of four."

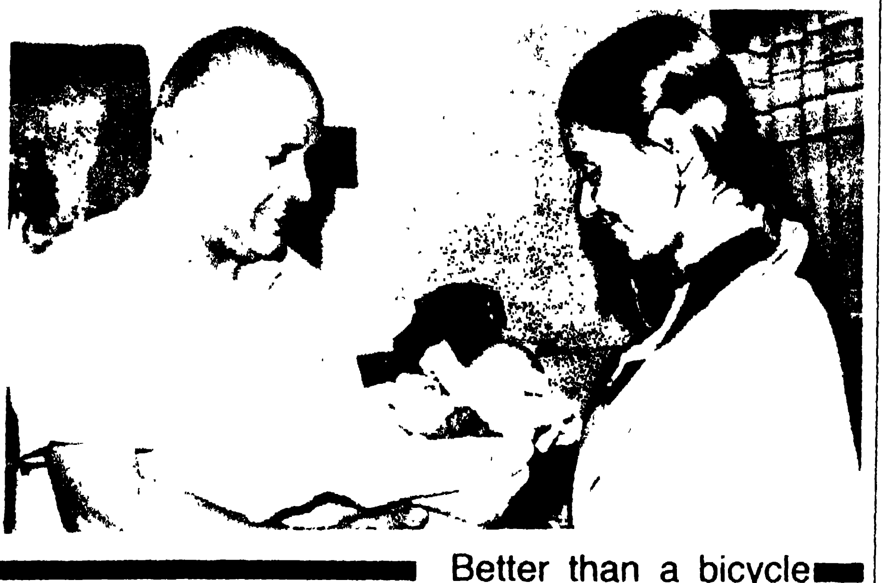
A brave act

Courage saved two infant boys and their terrified mother from almost certain tragedy in Sonakhira village, in the Cachar district of Assam. A thatched house in the village, belonging to a small trader, Sibsankar Verma, had accidentally caught fire, and Verma's two infant sons were trapped inside. The mother's hysterical cries for help only managed to attract a curious crowd—but no one came forward to rescue the infants. Until two boys, Dilip and Narain, unable to bear the mother's tears, raced into the burning house. A short while later, they emerged from the flames, with Mr Verma's two sons under their arms.

A home for the homeless

The Society for Protection of Abandoned Children (SPAC), at Raipur, has in the last two and a half years helped rehabilitate 34 abandoned children Dr M. M Dube (who also runs a sex education centre and is a leading social worker) and his wife Dr Vidya Dube, got the idea of setting up the society in 1978 when cases of unwed mothers abandoning or killing their children started coming to them Dr Dube, with the help of some citizens of Raipur, set up the SPAC Abandoned children are brought to them both by the police and ordinary people Children are maintained at the centre till foster parents are found, and they are only handed over after careful enquiries are made about the bonafides of the couples willing to adopt them. There have even been a few cases when unmarried pregnant women have come to the Dubes for help In such cases, the Dubes arrange for the delivery and keep the babies with them until foster parents are found. But the identity of the mother is never disclosed. Religion, caste and community are of no importance to Dr Dube and his wife.

Dr Dube handing over an abandoned child to a foster mother



A hero is remembered

About 125 years after he was shot dead by the British in 1857. Vir Narayan Singh, a tribal leader and freedom fighter from the Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh, was posthumously honoured on 29 March, when the Madhya Pradesh chief minister, Arjun Singh, announced a monthly pension of Rs 500 to the members of his family. Ever since the property of Narayan Singh was confiscated in 1856, his family has been living in miserable poverty. And it would have continued to do so had it not been for Ramendra Misra, a lecturer, who wrote extensively on him, and the Rajahara trade union leader, Shankar Guha Niyogi, who organised a Vir Narayan Singh anniversary in 1979 and 1980

Vir Narayan Singh's methods were, in part, quite revolutionary. When, in 1856, Raipur district was famine-stricken, Narayan Singh organised the villagers and looted a passing imperial treasury to help feed the people He was arrested for this in August 1856. But by May 1857, however, Vir Narayan Singh had managed to escape from jail and joined the mutiny In Sonarkhan (Chhatisgarh) he organised an army of tribals to fight the British

Better than a bicycle

Riding a bicycle would be even more effortless. A bicycle without pedals has been discovered by Mr Savy Martin, an executive of a book publishing firm in Calcutta. The new bicycle retains the chain and axle drive, but in place of the pedals is a mechanism consisting of a foot rest attached to a bow-shaped oscillating base connected to the cycle frame. The bicycle is propelled by means of a springboard attached to a crark-shaft mechanism It was his son's rocking horse that gave Mr Martin the idea of designing this new kind of bike for which he has now applied for both Indian and international patent rights.

Sunjay is the new he-man

It was a bloodlesss coup performed by shadowy images in vibrant colours and stereophonic sound Sunjay Dutt, *Rocky's* hero, who had barely managed a toehold on the starry ladder edged out, nay nearly threw out the super tough guy of Hindi films, Amitabh Bachchan. The coup happened suddenly on 9 March, during a private screening of *Rocky* in Bombay. All those who saw the movie felt a new macho symbol of the Hindi screen had at last emerged. Here was the he-man they could exploit in action-packed thrillers. And what's more, Sunjay Dutt, son of Sunil and Nargis Dutt, both stars, could act. When Nargis heard of her son's success, she was thrilled. As someone observed, Nargis looked 50 per cent better after seeing the film and that she would recover fully the moment *Rocky* became a box-office hit.

How could Sunjay Dutt make it to the top in such a short time? He seems to have inspired immense confidence in *Rocky's* producer, Gulshan Rai. Rai who has been in the trade for a long time did not fail to spot that Sunjay has all the ingredients necessary for a superstar-in-the-making. He has now become a godfather to the young Sunjay and, in fact, is taking extra care to see that Sunjay does not commit himself to too many films at the beginning of his career. Apart from *Rocky* Sunjay has two more assignments on hand—*Yudh* and *Vidhata*. Both are incidentally being produced by Gulshan Rai himself. Rai is so keen to hitch Sunjay to stardom that he did not even bother about the rising production costs of *Rocky*, which came about because of the delay. He had even told Sunil Dutt, the director of the film, not to worry about the completion of the film: Nargis was ill at the time when *Rocky* was still on the sets and Sunil Dutt had to be on her side in New York.

Gulshan Rai, however, is not the only man to have extended his helping hand to the Dutts. Raj Khosla, another personal friend of the Dutts, willingly came forward and directed *Rocky* when its shooting was taken up after Nargis showed signs of considerable recovery.

Sunjay Dutt's meteoric rise to stardom seems to have jolted the film industry. Gone are the days of Amitabh Bachchan and Rajesh Khanna. A new generation is stepping in, the generation of the sons. A new equation that is being worked out is: Kumar Gaurav, Rajendra Kumar's *Love Story* son is the screen's would-be romantic hero and Sunjay Dutt, the he-man of the action-crazy Hindi cinema. Others waiting in the wings are. Ajay Kumar, Kunal Goswami and Kunal Kapoor. Says a bigwig of the film industry: "There is nobody else. Among the older actors, only Jeetendra can be considered for every kind of role. Dharmendra, Rajesh Khanna and the rest will now have to play character roles. And Chintu has only a few more years as a star." Poor Amitabh Bachchan figures nowhere in the new equation He is already on his way out and nobody is sure what kind of roles he will be offered in future. Even Naseeruddin Shah does not enjoy the confidence of the industry experts: he has only a limited box-office draw and that too in the so-called "class films."

Sunjay Dutt and Tina Munim in Rocky

The unsinkable Kulbhushan Kharbanda

There was this desperate young man who wanted to join the glittery world of Hindi films. He went to Bombay, looked around for a filmy role for after all he was a very good actor. Directors and producers recognised his talent. They offered him roles. And then one of his films clicked. That did it! He was soon swamped with offers of lucrative roles. He became the heart-throb of millions overnight...

That is the Vijay Arora story.

Reality in the rat-race, cutthroat Hindi film industry is harsh, and this other story is the story of Kulbhushan Kharbanda, the new up-and-coming actor Chosen to play the lead in *Nakhuda* and the villain with the Yul Brynner look in *Shaan*, Kharbanda seems to be entangled in the spidery web of bad luck despite all the publicity that went before the release of the films.The roles were supposed to launch Kharbanda as the new Amjad Khan of the Hindi screen, but neither of the films were box-office hits. Kharbanda is yet to acquire the status of a star. But for all that, Kulbhushan's performance in *Nakhuda* was superb. And his limited role in *Shaan?* There is understanding both in and outside the film industry that Kharbanda was not responsible for it, for he is indeed a talented actor.

Why then did he not click? An inkling of what was going to happen was given, long before *Shaan* was released, by B. R. Chopra to this correspondent. Chopra had said that it would be very difficult for any new actor to live up to the expectations of the people. And the expectations were built by the massive publicity that went before the movies were released. His bald head and piercing looks dominated the LP jacket of *Shaan* shadowing such prominent stars as Amitabh Bachchan, Sunil Dutt and Shashi Kapoor. And what set Kharbanda up as the star with a capital S was when director Ramesh Sippy was believed to have told people that Kulbhushan Kharbanda was his trump card in *Shaan*. *Shaan* was still in the cans and yet to be released. And because of the excessive publicity, Kharbanda's market value shot up. Distributors began to feel that he was worth the investment.

The publicity had a negative effect. As soon as *Shaan* was released, critics and filmgoers started comparing Kulbhushan Kharbanda with the *Sholay*-famed Amjad Khan. And when that did not suffice, stories began circulating about a controversy between Ramesh Sippy and the writers, Salim-Javed. To add fuel to the fire someone spread the word that Kulbhushan had been chosen for the lead in *Nakhuda* over Sanjeev Kumar. Whether there was truth in that or not, does not really matter. But it brought Kharbanda down.

A still from Nakhuda

Kharbanda will probably pull thorugh the present crisis, thanks to his acting potential. Affirmed a film expert: "Of course, he will survive the failure of *Shaan* and *Nakhuda* because he is such a good actor." And filmmakers like Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand have not yet lost faith in him. In fact, Dev Anand has offered Kulbhushan an important role in his next venture, *Swami Dada*. When the role was offered to Kharbanda, the actor with his characteristic modesty told Dev Anand that he was making a mistake by offering him the role. But Dev Anand would not listen. He scolded Kharbanda and told him that the offer was justified.

For Kharbanda the ability to act is not enough. But then, he possesses the rare qualities of honesty and the knack of getting along with people. Moreover, struggle has been his forte, what with the hard work on the Delhi and Calcutta stages before he joined the Bombay film industry. Like the Hindi film villains who keep on turning up like counterfeit coins with their "never-say-die" attitudes, Kharbanda is not the one to be daunted by the challenge of winning over the hearts of millions. He has the ingredients. All he needs is a good role to serve his talents on. ■

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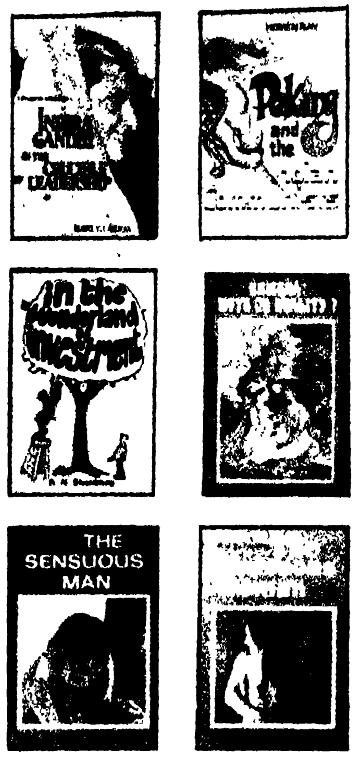

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KHAAS BAAT

Rakhee:a notch above Rekha

Rekha's popularity is on test. She is pitted against *Rakhee* in *Bassara*. Rakhee's voice, for which the actress is famous, recently came in for a bout of drubbing, when the actress had to do a lot of shouting and screaming during the shooting. But it was only the voice that suffered. The acting was unimpaired with the result that it was Rakhee and not Rekha who won all the applause hands down. What with the sweet innocence of *Jaya* in *Silsila* and now the remarkable acting skills of Rakhee in *Bassara*, Rekha will have to try very hard to prove that she is not just an overrated star with only cosmetic superiority over her colleagues.

The attractive young girl in casual tops and pants at the departure lounge of Bombay airport looked very familiar except that the nose was too long and the mouth not quite so attractive. Soon she walked up to another girl sitting with her back to the entrance, hair let loose, covering the part of her face left bare by the sunglasses, and then the stampede began. The other girl: none other than *Smita Patil* and the incredible look alike—her very own sister!

Obesity has struck the heroines of the industry. *Hema* looks very pregnant indeed on the sets of *Kranti*, and she knows it too Perhaps that is why, these days, she does a lot of rushing around in the mock filmy style asking for sour pickle, on the sets. But for all her tricks, Hema might really be pregnant. Mere satisfaction at having got her man can hardly explain her volume. But what of *Zeenat?* She has never looked as fat as she does now and Zeenie baby is yet to find herself the right man!

DURGAPRSAD

Dev the ego trip didn't quite come off

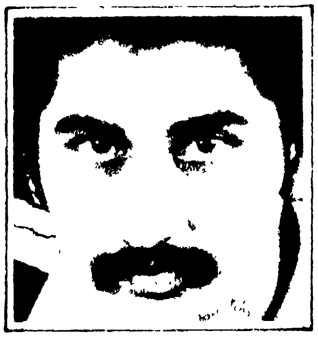
Smita Patil in a still from Chakra

Perhaps for the first time, *Dev Anand* has been refused an ego trip. In a desperate bid to find a new face for his latest film, Dev went all the way to Trivandrum. And the search paid off. For in one of the many famous dancing schools of the state he found the girl of his choice: a foreign girl who was taking dancing lessons. Dev offered her the role of the heroine. But, she was no star-struck foreigner dreaming of the silver screen, only a very serious student of Indian classical dance who promptly turned down the offer. Dev Anand was amazed and a trifle shocked too considering all the *Reenas* and *Tinas* and *Shabanas* who have given their all just to be in one of Dev's films. But the shock, it seems did not last long. Dev is back on his feet on a serious *phirangi* hunt all over again.

KHAAS BAAT

Who are the people who sent anonymous telegrams and letters to the film festival directorate asking them to drop *Balu Mahendra* from the jury judging films for the national awards? The messages said that since charges were pending against Balu he did not deserve to be on the jury But that is queer logic By the same token people would not want producers to sign Balu as director for films. That they do not want because *Panchami*, the first film directed by Balu after *Shoba*'s death is almost complete

Ravindran Nair who has produced all the award winning films of *Aravindan*, among them *Kanchana Seetha*, flipped for *Naseeruddin Shah* after he saw *Albert Pinto* and *Aakrosh* He was quite tempted to approach the star with an assignment for a Malayalam film but then Nair remembered that Aravindan does not work with established stars



Suman

Why should *T. S. Ranga* think of making a movie with *Lakshmi* when his girlfriend, *Ashwini*, is such a fine actress? That's because Ashwini has decided to quit movies for good. In fact, she won't act in Ranga's next movie as she will in all probability be getting married to him in a couple of months. Mean while, Ashwini's Tamil movie *Nandu* has drawn a lot of attention. Directed by *J. Mahendran*, *Nandu* was shot in and around Lucknow. It is about a cancer patient and Mahendran has decided to retain a number of Hindi lines in the film. There are also a couple of Hindi songs sung by Bombay's *Bhupindra*.

Aruna Irani the sizzler turning cold down south

The dresses which Kerala women wear show their anatomy to the best advantage. In fact, the dresses turn out to be excellent excuses for exploitation of the female anatomy. It was widely seen in several soft-porn Malayalam films. But when *Deepti Naval* accepted her first role in the Malayalam film, *Chirutha*, she made doubly sure that she won't be playing to the gallery. Based on a well-known Malayalam novel, *Chirutha* is the first film of *Tanveer Ahmed*. Deepti's performance is excellent

Bhanuchander and Madhavi

And now the gossip mills are busy raking up *Rajnikant's* sexual exploits. Tamil magazines and dailies are vying with each other to print exclusive interviews with the newly-married Rajni. There was this story that he did not want to marry *Latha* but he was blackmailed, thanks to some "indiscretions" on his part. There are other stories too which our man dismisses as pure fiction. One of them is about how he had a sexual crush, (hold your breath!) when he was only nine with his seven-year-old cousin. the last one his confession that he has been sleeping with his wife, Latha, for the last seven months.

Asked why he has not been in the news lately, *Pratap Pothen* whispered. "Maybe you should really investigate?" Knowing Pratap well he won't flip for a star. You see he was a copywriter in an advertising concern before he realised that the call of the greasepaint was greater. And for his press shows, there are always some beautiful women he can ogle at!

PIOUSJI

Deepti Naval: Southward, ho'

April aura.

Summer haze. Lazy days.
Yellow sails in the sunset.
Golden hours on the shore.

Start an ice-cream affair.
Find the flavour of your life.
Dine by the light of the moon.
Don't let April love slip
away . . .

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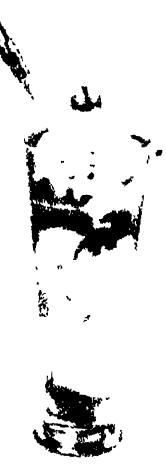

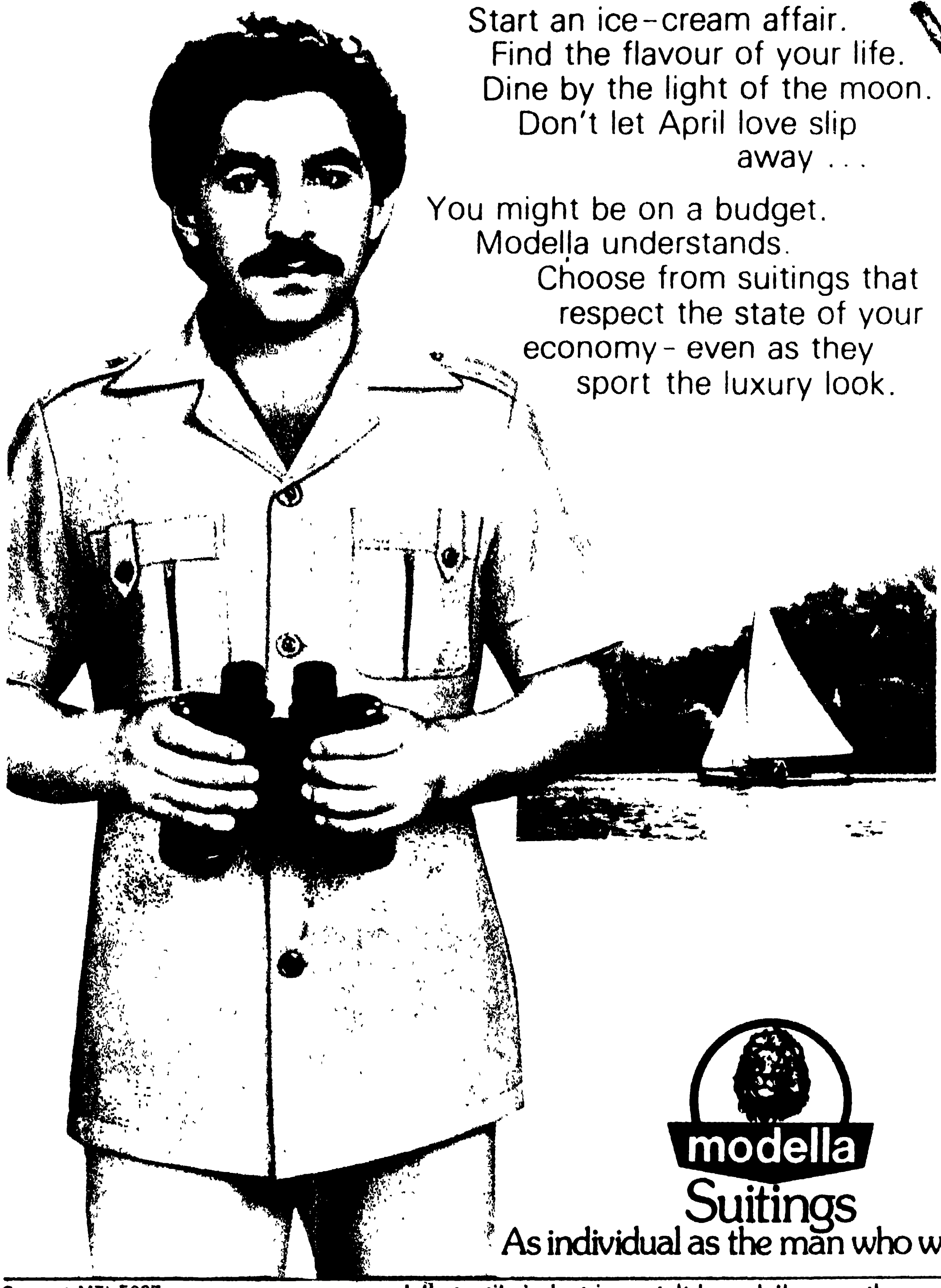

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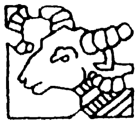
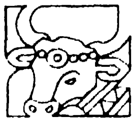
Beginning 26 April
This week the Sun, Mars and Venus are in Aries, Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto are in Virgo, Rahu is in Cancer and Ketu is in Capricorn. The Moon will be moving through Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces from Sagittarius.

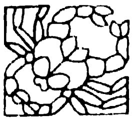


ARIES (15 April—14 May) An elderly person will prove extremely helpful to you this week. Your professional front will demand a lot of your time and energy The time is particularly favourable for expansion and innovation The weekend will bring with it the hope for success in the very near future Your domestic front will be calm Love affairs will progress smoothly You are advised to check extravagance **Good dates**: 30, 1 and 2 **Lucky numbers**: 1, 3 and 6 **Favourable direction**: East



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Financial satisfaction will continue to elude you this week However, your partner or spouse will brighten up your spirits by providing timely help and advice. The time is not particularly favourable for gambling or taking undue risks on your professional front Letters should be treated with much importance as some of them are bound to provide you with vital information **Good dates**: 29, 1 and 2 '**Lucky numbers**: 2, 4 and 6 **Favourable direction**: South

GEMINI (15 June—14 July) You are likely to encounter serious competition on your professional front this week. Not all with be well However, a secret association may come handy at this point of your life Matters related to the heart will make steady progress, provided you are not too impulsive in speech and action You are advised against losing your confidence. Check both your temper and extravagance **Good dates**: 26, 28 and 30 **Lucky numbers**: 2, 6 and 9 **Favourable direction**: North

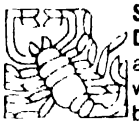


CANCER (15 July—14 August) Your will-power, gumption and perseverance will see you through a lot of trouble this week An old friend will render you invaluable service The time, however, is not favourable for taking undue risks and for gambling. Your domestic front will be free from trouble. Subordinates may cause anxiety. Seniors or those in authority will be sympathetic, if not helpful, to you Look after your health. **Good dates**: 27, 29 and 2 **Lucky numbers**: 6, 8 and 9 **Favourable direction**: West.

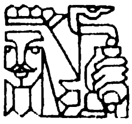
LEO (15 August—14 September) You will gain unexpectedly this week You might have to go out of your way to seek favours for your family A fair measure of happiness is in store for you Elders in your family will prove helpful. You may gain through property or insurance matters. The time is not favourable for love and matrimonial affairs. Keep up your correspondence with friends **Good dates**: 26, 27 and 1 **Lucky numbers**: 3, 5 and 7 **Favourable direction**: East

VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Financial gains are in store for you this week The time is also favourable for interviews and correspondence with your loved one. New friends and fresh interests will contribute to your happiness The health of your family members will generally show a marked improvement You are advised pay attention to professional details and to forge ahead **Good dates**: 29, 30 and 2 **Lucky numbers**: 4, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction**: North

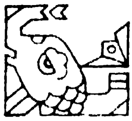
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Promotions or transfers are in store for government employees this week You may have to undertake a journey to a distant place in connection with your work You might fall in love again This, more than anything else, will be beneficial to you You must guard against evil influences which might ruin your career beyond repair Exercise tact and restraint in both written and spoken word **Good dates**: 26, 28 and 2 **Lucky numbers**: 3, 6 and 9 **Favourable direction**: West



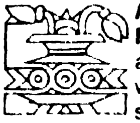
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Your fortunes are less propitious this week Those engaged in business will be required to shoulder added responsibilities Deceit is in store for those born around midday Others will have to guard against misleading rumours and advice However, the time is particularly favourable for romance You are advised to follow your intuitions and to make necessary amends **Good dates**: 26, 28 and 30. **Lucky numbers**: 2, 7 and 9 **Favourable direction**: South.



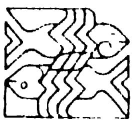
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Your friends will let you down this week. The time is not favourable for getting into any sort of controversy either Womenfolk, however, will enjoy a pleasant week, acquiring new clothes and ornaments towards the end of it. But the weekend is not favourable for others who might find themselves confronted with many problems Avoid bad company. **Good dates**: 29 and 2 **Lucky numbers**: 3, 5 and 8 **Favourable direction**: North-west.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Intense and hectic activity is in store for you this week Your prospects are brighter than ever before Your domestic front will provide you with all the encouragement and inspiration that you need You will also stand to gain through a secret source or association. Progress will be good and steady. You are advised to push your affairs to the utmost.**Good dates**: 26, 27 and 1. **Lucky numbers**: 2, 4 and 7 **Favourable direction**: East



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This promises to be a highly uneventful and dull week for you However, some good fortune, by way of financial gains and business expansion, is indicated Your enemies may be on the prowl, but not yet in a position to harm you in any way Problems will cease to worry you You might have to postpone the journey you had planned to undertake The time is favourable for love and romance **Good dates**: 26, 30 and 2 **Lucky numbers**: 6, 7 and 9 **Favourable direction**: South-west



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This week will provide you with the opportunity to take a short holiday and thereby get away from the general pressures of life The time is ideal for relaxation Do not exert yourself unnecessarily The health of a family member may cause anxiety and result in medical expenditure You are advised to pay heed to your hunches and intuition and to keep up your efforts in love affairs. **Good dates**: 27, 29 and 1 **Lucky numbers**: 4, 8 and 9 **Favourable direction**: North-west.

Political forecast for 1981: Israeli Prime Minister Begin will retire from active politics on account of ill-health Violence is in store for Uganda and Zambia. In the period between April and September a confrontation between the USA and USSR will appear incumbent But there is no possibility of a third world war. South-east Asia will remain in a state of unrest, primarily on account of Chinese and Soviet interests in that region West Asia, particularly the Islamic countries, will also go through a phase of increased disharmony. AMRITLAL

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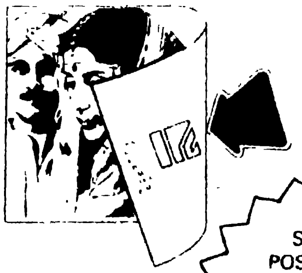

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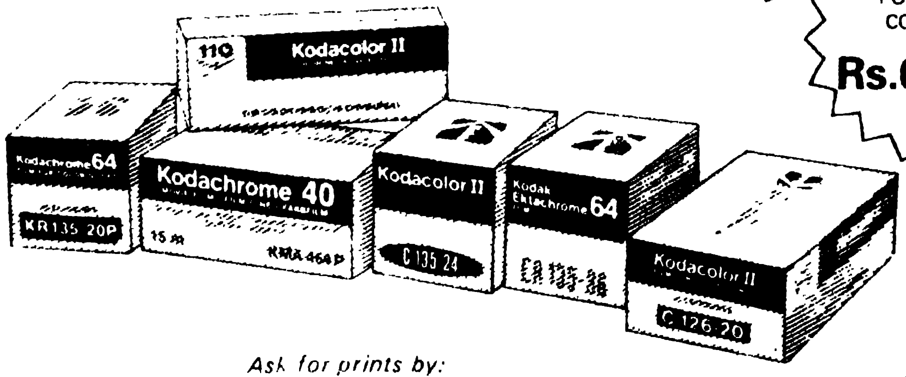

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VARANASI A woman, who rejected the marriage proposal of a young man, had to return home without her nose. This happened in Varanasi. The woman is a mother of three children and has been deserted by her husband. A report with the police said the woman, while shopping in the market, was approached by a young man with a marriage proposal. This brought a sharp retort from the woman. Infuriated at this, the young man chopped off the nose of the woman and fled. He is absconding—*Deccan Herald* (G. Rama Rathan, Mysore)

MIDNAPORE: The rain gods played a prank on newly-wed couples near here. Four pairs of newly-wed were caught in the rains as they got down at Heria bus stop near Khejuri. They immediately got into waiting rickshaws Reaching home amid cheering relatives, bride found to her dismay that the groom was not hers She was immediately taken back to the bus stop to meet her consort waiting with another bride—*Free Press Bulletin* (Rita Jha, Bombay)

BANGALORE. Has the government "reserved" 18 per cent of the police kicks for the scheduled castes and tribes? Mr T. A. Reddy (Congress-U) posed this question in the Legislative Council while participating in the discussion on the alleged police assault on a scheduled caste MLA. When Mr T. N. Narasimha Murthy (Cong-I) said 80 per cent of the kicks were "reserved" for these sections of society, Mr A. K. Subbiah (BJP) was quick to ask Mr Murthy: "Then why are you in this party?" Mr Murthy: "It's so all over the country." Mr Subbiah: "Your party is in power throughout the country and then it amounts to admitting that the Congress(I) has failed to protect scheduled caste and tribe people"—*Deccan Herald* (R. Narayana Rao, Bangalore)

PUNE: Backward class government employees in Maharashtra have taken up the case of a high-caste brahmin officer who is alleged to have been unjustly removed from service by the state government. Dr D. E. Ayachit, an assistant director of *ayurved* was asked to relinquish the job following an objection raised on his appointment by the public service commission four years ago. His plight came to the notice of "Castribe" an organisation championing the cause of the backward classes employees and unemployeds in the state. Mr Nanasaheb Patil, general secretary of "Castribe," told a press conference here on Monday (2 March) that the doctor's cause was being successfully pursued and "we expect to get him appointed to his former position"—*Times of India* (Anand Ramrao Deshpande, Solapur)

A minister had gone to Palam airport on an inspection visit. Everyone was so busy showering attention on him and taking care of his entourage that an entire planeload of passengers was allowed to go without the most perfunctory baggage check. The customs loss, by way of non-realisation of duty and other levies from this incident, is estimated by a customs official at about Rs three lakhs—*Patriot* (Usha Gupta, Delhi)

UJJAIN· More than 25 people including a 70-year-old man walked over a burning coal bed six feet by two feet, watched by thousands of wonder-struck spectators in the village of Tajpur in Ujjain district. The occasion was the annual fair to mark the holi festival in the village. The fire-walkers said that they had been doing the feat since long to get their wishes fulfilled, or for the end of their miseries, or just for the welfare of their children and grand children. Among those who took part were Anandi Nath with his 10-year-old niece in his arms and 75-year-old Dhania besides some women. All of them had some women. All of them had some problems or wish in their minds for doing this penance—*Times of India* (Rashbehari Das, Calcutta)

SALEM: Atrocities, rapes, murders and dacoities in the country have driven a freedom fighter to return his *tamrapatra* and his freedom fighters' pension book to the district authorities. The freedom fighter Mr O. C. Kumaraswamy was getting a pension of Rs 400. He had returned his pension book along with the *tamrapatra* to district collector S. R. Karuppannan asking him whether the country got independence to commit atrocities and rapes. Mr Kumaraswamy had been jailed for three years during the freedom struggle in Bombay, Pune and Bellary. He was active in the quit India movement of 1942. He had boycotted foreign textiles and participated in the *swadeshi* movement. He joined the freedom movement in 1932. The collector's plea not to refuse the pension was of no avail and the freedom fighter walked away sobbing. He is a native of Komarapalayam in Salem district and is now residing at Hanuman Theertham in Dharmapuri district—*Indian Express* (A. Rafi Ahmed, Trichy)

without comment

I think he (Jyoti Basu) wants us to remove him. But we are not going to do that—Mrs Gandhi

I am tired after holding that office (of chief minister) for six and a half years. My *guru* and seasoned politician, Mr Ashok Sen, should assume the *gaddi* in such an event—Siddartha Shankar Ray on whether he would like to become West Bengal chief minister again

I am a humble servant of my party and I will abide by whatever decisions the high command takes—Jagannath Pahadia, Rajasthan CM

I have been touring the country with binoculars looking for such a government (that worked). It can be found nowhere—A. B. Vajpayee, BJP president

I do not relish sitting as a banyan tree over others—Sheikh Abdullah

By singling me out as *janab*, he (Sharad Pawar) wishes to convey that I do not 'belong' and that I am a Muslim—A. R. Antulay, Maharashtra CM in *Current*

If they (Congress-I) persist with this sort of thing, the consequences will be serious. Should I, in turn, send out boys to the houses of these Congress gangsters?—Jyoti Basu, West Bengal CM on the demonstration by the Congress(I) near his house

It is time for the USA to choose between 80 million people and one man—Zia-ul-Haq—Nafees Siddiqi, acting president of the moderate Tehrik-e-Istaqlal party of Pakistan

Pakistan is an old friend in a part of the world where the American position needs bolstering—Editorial in *Washington Post*

Our experience has shown that when Pakistan faced internal troubles,it resorted to armed aggression against our country—Mrs Gandhi

We appreciate all those who helped...but it was our war and we fought it...many claims when a war succeeds—Zia-ur-Rahman, President of Bangladesh

I have had five wives: a schoolgirl, a gentleman, an actress, a ballerina and a crocodile—Film director John Huston in his autobiography, *An Open Book*

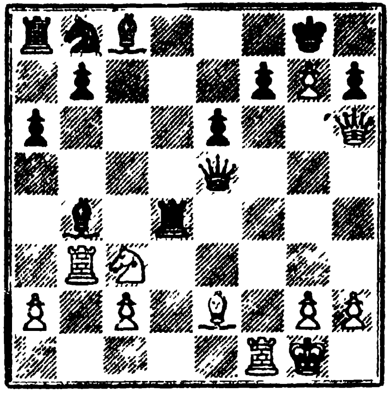
Men try to arrest their age and recapture youth by being with younger women. Women don't get misrouted like that—Actress Ali MacGraw

Illustration Ahi Bhusan Malik

VARIETY

chess

Quinteros (Black)



Mahia (White) to move

Position after Black's 18th move

Mate on the Pampas

Argentina, land of football and corned beef, is fast becoming a major force in world chess Since the Buenos Aires Olympiad two years ago there have been several major chess events, culminating in the recent Korchnoi-Polugaevsky match Following in their wake has been the emergence of a new generation of very promising young players Towards the end of last year ex-world champion Tigran Petrosian came very nastily to grief against the previously unknown junior Tempone in the Clarin tournament. More recently, in a tournament organised to celebrate the 70th birthday of grandmaster Miguel Najdorf, the same Tempone was only half a point behind the joint winners Browne (US), Smyslov (USSR), Panno and Emma (Arg). Undoubtedly the most spectacular game of the event was also played by a junior, 16-year-old schoolboy Mahia, who produced the following brilliancy worthy of Tal at his best. Aptly enough the opening was the Sicilian Defence – Najdorf Variation!

White Mahia. Black· Quinteros

1. P—K4, P—QB4; 2. N—KB3, P—Q3; 3. P—Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, N—KB3; 5. N—QB3, P—QR3; 6. B—KN5, P—K3; 7. P—B4, Q—N3; 8. Q—Q2, Q x P; 9. R—QN1, Q—R6; 10. P—K5, P x P; 11. P x P, KN—Q2; 12. B—K2 Not according to theory White's most dangerous try here. It seems the danger only comes later.

12. . . ., B—N5; 13. R—N3, Q—R4; 14. O—O, O—O; 15. B—B6!? Brilliance or bluff? After 15 . . . , P x B, 16. P x P, K—R1, 17. Q—R6, R—N1; 18 B—Q3, N—B1, the attack appears to be running out of steam, but appearances can be deceptive

15. . . ., N x B; 16. P x N, R—Q1; 17. P x P, R x N; 18. Q—R6 Of course not 18 Q x R, B—B4. **18. . . ., Q—K4;** The next move will be . . . , Q x NP and White is dead, but the prospective corpse suddenly lashes out

DIAGRAM

19. N—K4!! A superb clearance sacrifice, opening the third rank for his rook If by the way Black ignores it with 19. . . . , Q x NP there comes 20 N—B6+, K—R1, 21. R—N3, Q x Q, 22 R—N8 mate

19. . . ., Q x N; 20. B—R6. Threatening mate in one with B x P

20. . . ., R—Q2; 21. R—Q3, B—B4+; 22. K—R1, B—Q5; The only defence against White's threat of R x R followed by B x P mate.

23. R—KN3, N—B3; 24. B—N6!! Another thunderbolt If 24 . . . , RP x B he is mated on R8 or 24 . . . BP x B allows mate on B8

24. . . ., Q x B; 25. R x Q, N—K2; 26. R x P! A beautiful finish to a beautiful game.

26. . . ., K x R; 27. P—N8=Q+, N x Q; 28. Q x P+ Resigns. (28. . . . , K—B1; 29. R x N mate.) The New Ardiles?

WATCH THOSE KNIGHTS

White· Lputyan. Black. Magerramov

Modern Benoni

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—QB4; 3. P—Q5, P—K3; 4. N—QB3, P x P; 5. P x P, P—Q3; 6. P—K4, P—KN3; 7. P—B4, B—N2; 8. P—K5, P x P; 9. P x P, KN—Q2; 10. P—K6, P x P; 11. P x P, Q—K2; 12. B—K2, N—N3; 13. B—KB4, B x KP; 14. N—B3, B—B5; 15. O—O, B x B; 16. N x B, O—O; 17. B—Q6, Q—K6+; 18. K—R1, R—Q1; 19. N—B4, Q—K5; 20. N—N5, Q—B3; 21. Q—N3+ Resigns (21. . . ., P—B5; 22. Q—R3, P—KR3; 23. Q—K6+, K—R1; 24. N x P mate).

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

All the magazines have a feature in which readers are invited to answer bidding problems and the opinions of an expert panel are subsequently disclosed They are invariably well done, but Le Dentu's feature in *Le Bridgeur* (despite his tendency to cast me in the role of a sarcastic know-all) is surely the wittiest and most profound. Disposing of more space than the others, he often describes the deal that led to the problem, so that sometimes a panelist is able to confirm the wisdom of his pronouncement This problem from the July issue was one of those occasions

Love all, the bidding goes

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
No	No	No	1♠
2♣	dble	2♦	No

What should South say now, holding
♠852 ♥10 ♦AK10 ♣K109853?

I answered to the effect that partner's best suit might well be hearts and that to advance to Three Diamonds would achieve nothing and might lead to a penalty. However, more than half the big panel voted for Three Diamonds Jean Besse put it well, I thought

'Pass Do you propose 3 ♦ to drown your rescuer?'

Besse, as it happened, though he did not recall the occasion, was at the table when the situation arose at Amsterdam in 1955 during the match between Switzerland and Germany

Dealer, South Love all

♠ J 6 4 3 ♥ J 9 ♦ Q J 9 8 ♣ A J 2	♠ K 10 7 ♥ K 8 7 5 2 ♦ 7 5 4 3 ♣ 6 N W E S ♠ 8 5 2 ♥ 10 ♦ A K 10 ♣ K 10 9 8 5 3	♠ A Q 9 ♥ A Q 6 4 3 ♦ 6 2 ♣ Q 7 4

The Swiss North-South pair conceded 700 in Two Clubs doubled Their dismay was lightened when they heard of the result at the other table:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pfaffenbichler	Reichenbach	Dr Oetor	Besse
			1♠
No	No	No	No
2♣	dble	2♦ (?)	No
3♦ (?)	dble	No	
No			

'Merci beaucoup, partenaire', said the good doctor when East led a trump and the dummy went down. But his tally was limited to the Ace and King of trumps—1300 to the opposition.

North's Two Diamonds was doubtless ill-judged He should either pass or, in the modern style, redouble for a rescue.

TERENCE REESE

stamps

As soon as King Edward VIII had made his abdication broadcast on 11 December 1936, stamp collectors and dealers began to lay in large stocks of the stamps bearing his portrait which were on sale at post offices Issued in September 1936, the stamps were in face values of ½d, 1d, 1½d and 2½d. The design, unadorned by the customary wreaths, scrolls and spandrels, had been based on a suggestion by an 18-year-old Torquay collector, H. J. Brown. So many of the stamps were bought as souvenirs or as an investment that they are still very common. Even the booming market in British stamps during the past few years has failed to lift their value. The set of four in mint condition can be bought for about 60p and used examples are even cheaper

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1 What is Meenahite?

2 Brachiopods, commonly known as lamp shells, exhibit little variety today, although in the past great diversity existed among them Where would you find Brachiopods?

3 With what would you associate the Golden Gloves?

4 What does it mean to have an atrial flutter?

5 The Gulf of Carpentaria is a shallow, rectangular embayment of some 120,000 square miles and became internationally famous with the exploitation of its aluminium, manganese and shrimp resources. Where is the Gulf?

ANSWERS

1. A form of cast iron that is increasingly used for making bearings for bridges
2. In the oceans These are among the very early species of marine invertebrates and were one of the most abundant forms of life
3. Boxing Formed in 1923 by the *Chicago Tribune*, this amateur competition quickly turned into a national boxing competition rivalling that of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States that existed since 1888.
4. It means that an individual has very swift and irregular heart beat. The phenomenon is caused by a delay of impulses to the ventricle. This disorder is most often, but not always, seen in persons with organic heart disease
5. On the northeast coast of Australia.

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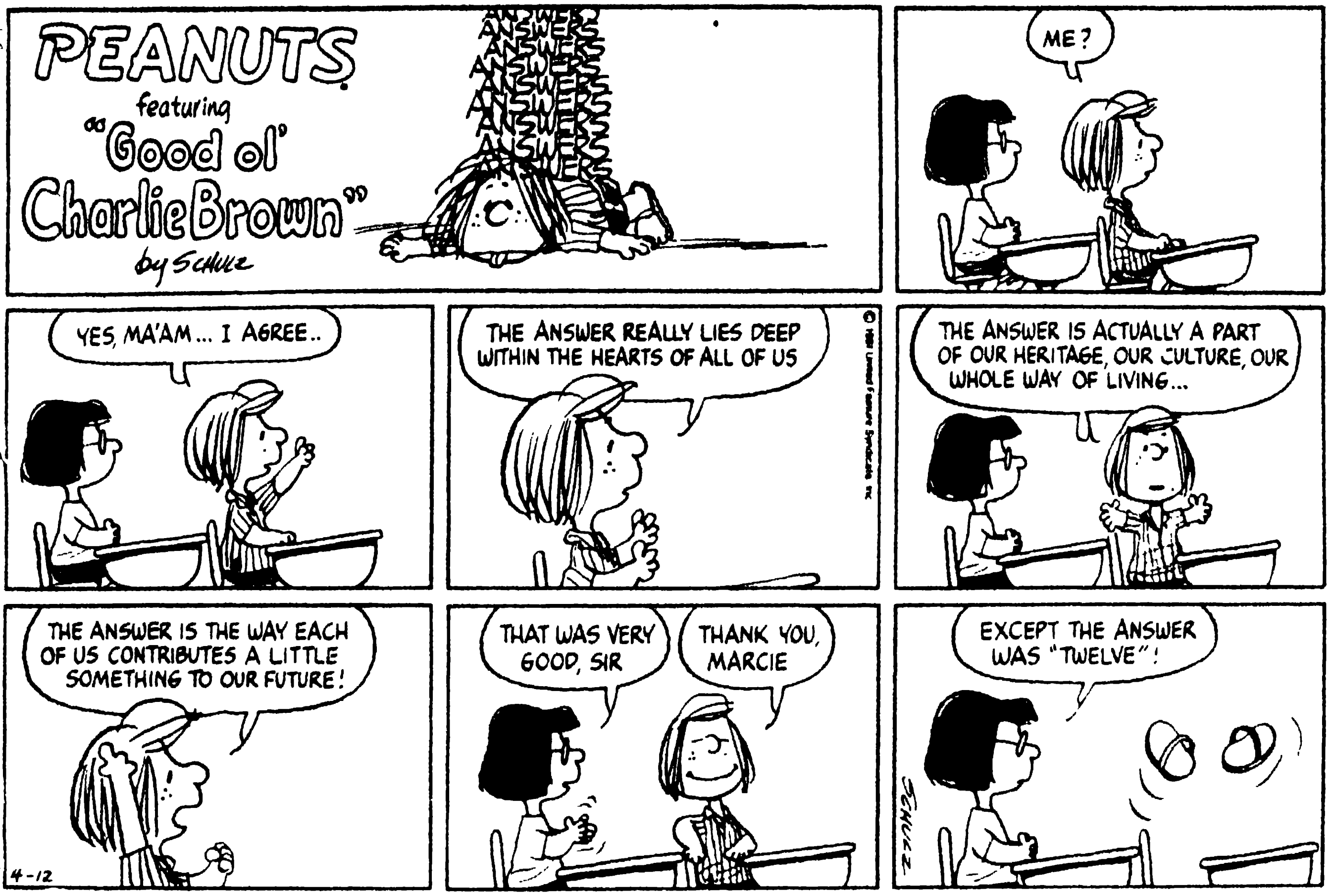
PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol' Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ
ANSWERS ANSWERS ANSWERS ANSWERS ANSWERS ANSWERS ANSWERS ANSWERS
ME?
YES, MA'AM... I AGREE..
THE ANSWER REALLY LIES DEEP WITHIN THE HEARTS OF ALL OF US
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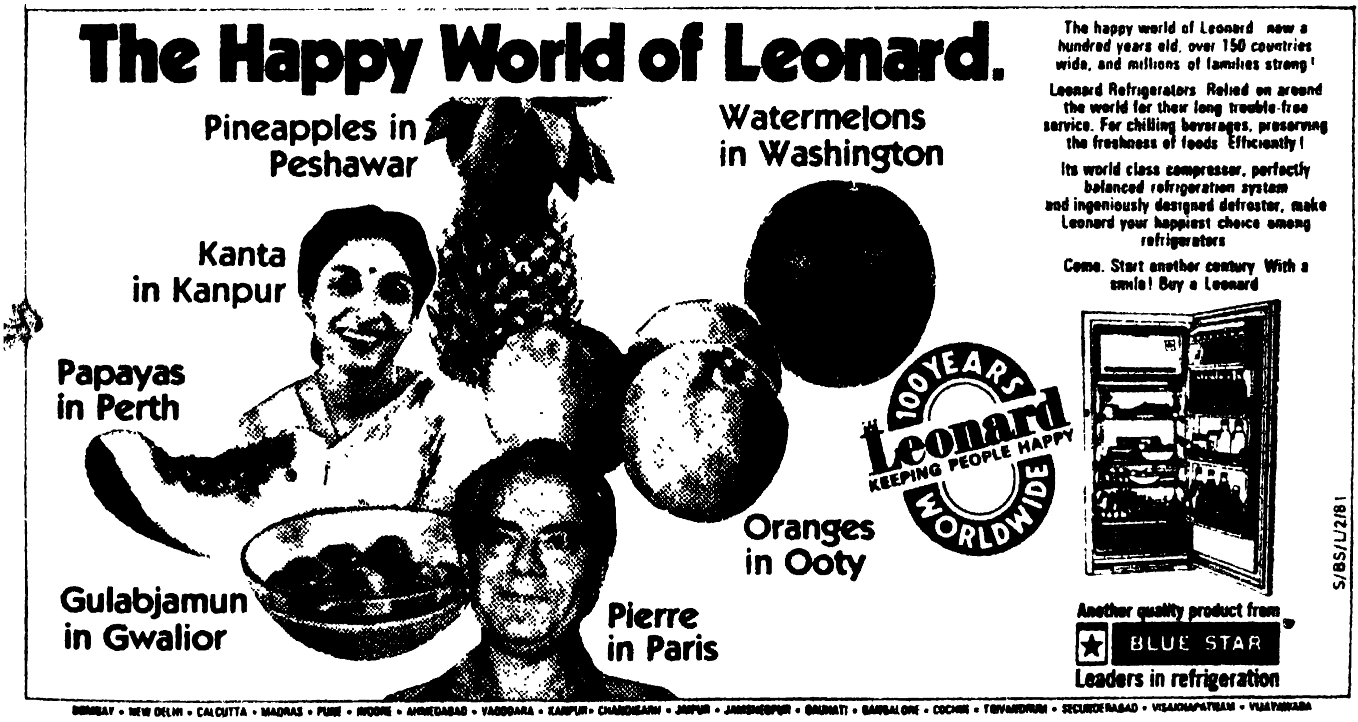
THE ANSWER IS ACTUALLY A PART OF OUR HERITAGE, OUR CULTURE, OUR WHOLE WAY OF LIVING...
THE ANSWER IS THE WAY EACH OF US CONTRIBUTES A LITTLE SOMETHING TO OUR FUTURE!
4-12
THAT WAS VERY GOOD, SIR
THANK YOU, MARCIE
EXCEPT THE ANSWER WAS "TWELVE"!
SCHULZ



The Happy World of Leonard.

Pineapples in Peshawar
Watermelons in Washington
Kanta in Kanpur
Papayas in Perth
Oranges in Ooty
Gulabjamun in Gwalior
Pierre in Paris
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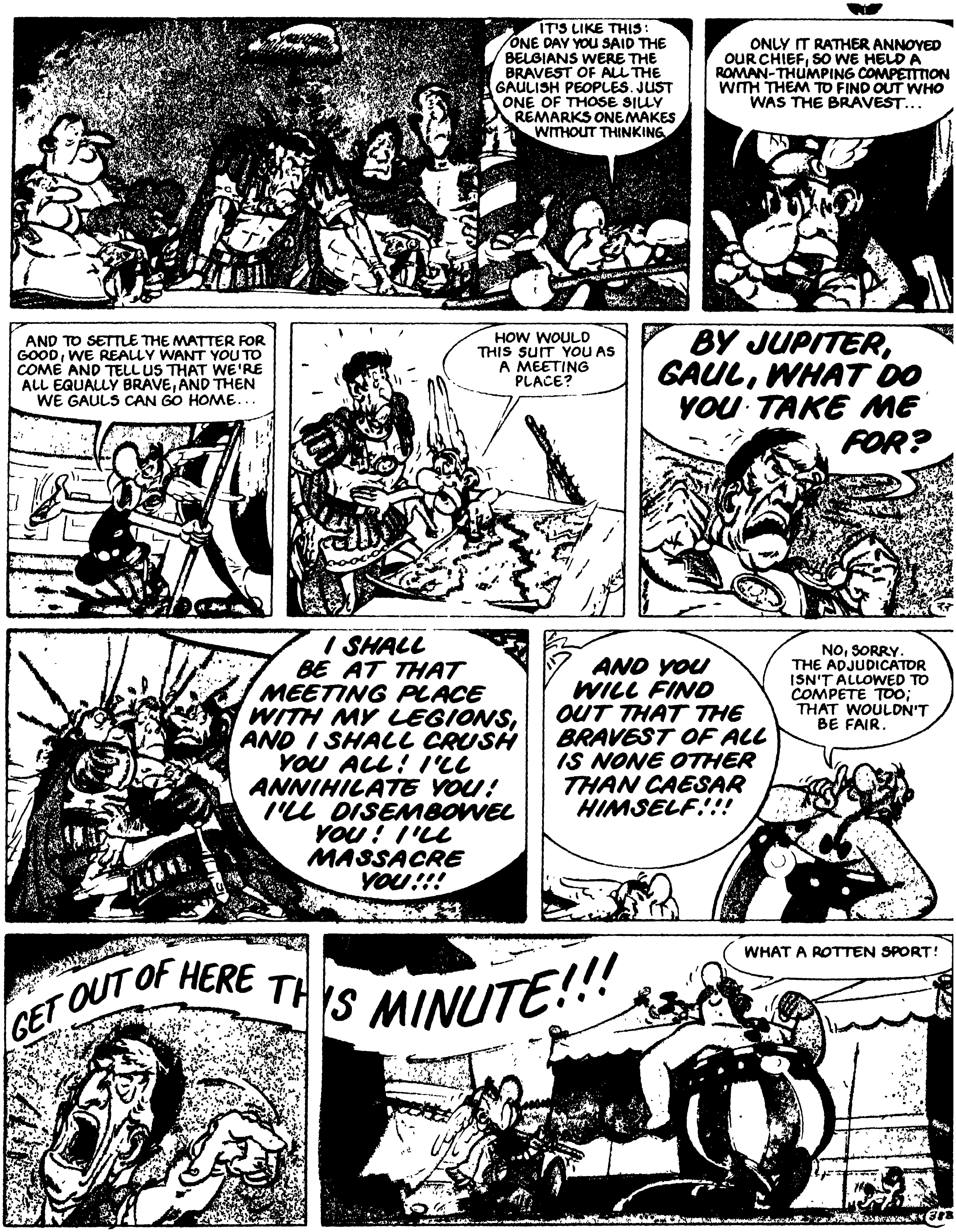
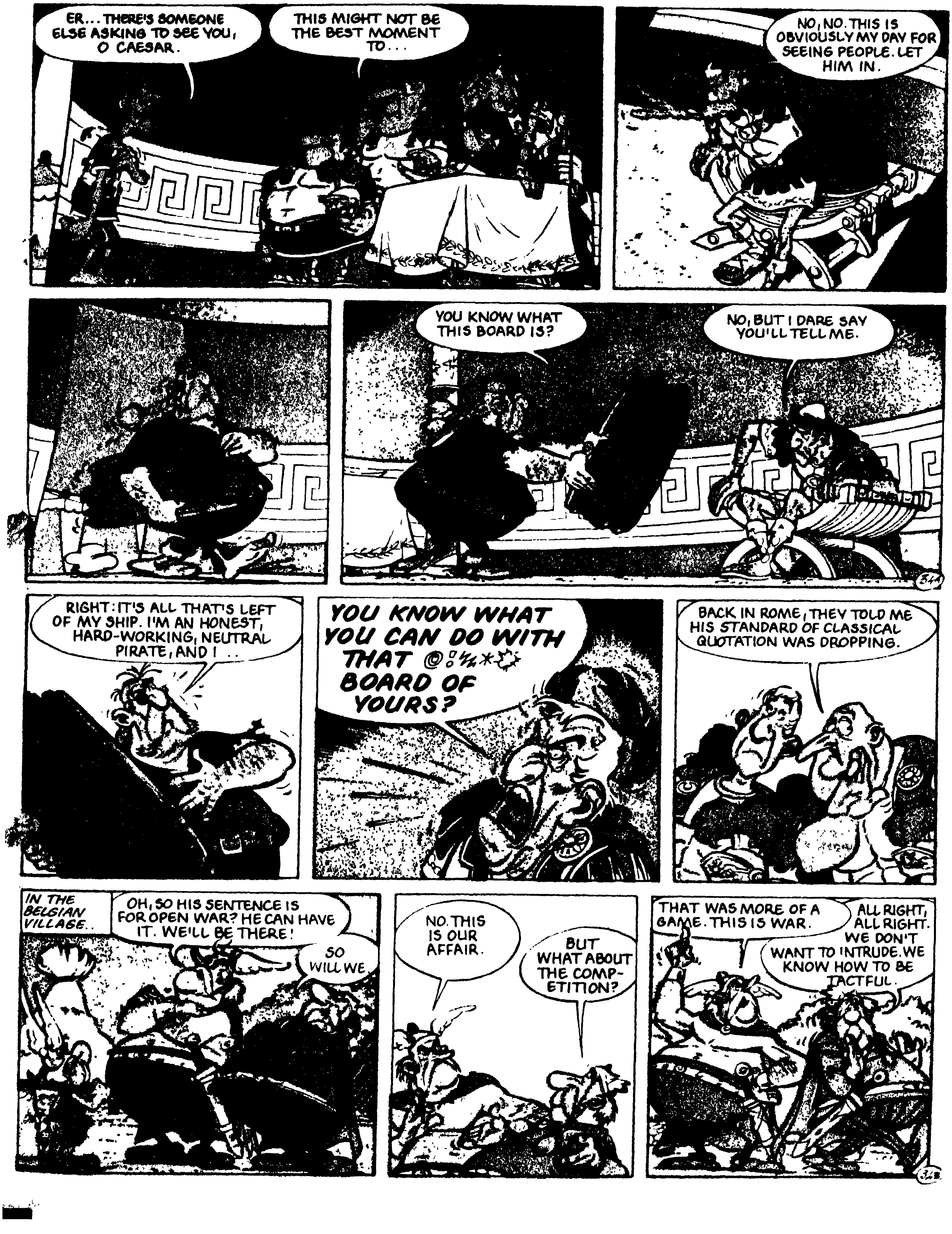
Asterix in BELGIUM

by GOSCINNY and UDERZO


IT'S LIKE THIS: ONE DAY YOU SAID THE BELGIANS WERE THE BRAVEST OF ALL THE GAULISH PEOPLES. JUST ONE OF THOSE SILLY REMARKS ONE MAKES WITHOUT THINKING
ONLY IT RATHER ANNOYED OUR CHIEF, SO WE HELD A ROMAN-THUMPING COMPETITION WITH THEM TO FIND OUT WHO WAS THE BRAVEST...
AND TO SETTLE THE MATTER FOR GOOD, WE REALLY WANT YOU TO COME AND TELL US THAT WE'RE ALL EQUALLY BRAVE, AND THEN WE GAULS CAN GO HOME...
HOW WOULD THIS SUIT YOU AS A MEETING PLACE?
BY JUPITER, GAUL, WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?
I SHALL BE AT THAT MEETING PLACE WITH MY LEGIONS, AND I SHALL CRUSH YOU ALL! I'LL ANNIHILATE YOU! I'LL DISEMBOWEL YOU! I'LL MASSACRE YOU!!!
AND YOU WILL FIND OUT THAT THE BRAVEST OF ALL IS NONE OTHER THAN CAESAR HIMSELF!!!
NO, SORRY. THE ADJUDICATOR ISN'T ALLOWED TO COMPETE TOO; THAT WOULDN'T BE FAIR.
GET OUT OF HERE THIS MINUTE!!!
WHAT A ROTTEN SPORT!


ER... THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE ASKING TO SEE YOU, O CAESAR.
THIS MIGHT NOT BE THE BEST MOMENT TO...
NO, NO. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY MY DAY FOR SEEING PEOPLE. LET HIM IN.
YOU KNOW WHAT THIS BOARD IS?
NO, BUT I DARE SAY YOU'LL TELL ME.
RIGHT: IT'S ALL THAT'S LEFT OF MY SHIP. I'M AN HONEST, HARD-WORKING, NEUTRAL PIRATE, AND I...
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THAT @!%*☼ BOARD OF YOURS?
BACK IN ROME, THEY TOLD ME HIS STANDARD OF CLASSICAL QUOTATION WAS DROPPING.
IN THE BELGIAN VILLAGE..
OH, SO HIS SENTENCE IS FOR OPEN WAR? HE CAN HAVE IT. WE'LL BE THERE!
SO WILL WE.
NO. THIS IS OUR AFFAIR.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE COMP-ETITION?
THAT WAS MORE OF A GAME. THIS IS WAR.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. WE DON'T WANT TO INTRUDE. WE KNOW HOW TO BE TACTFUL.

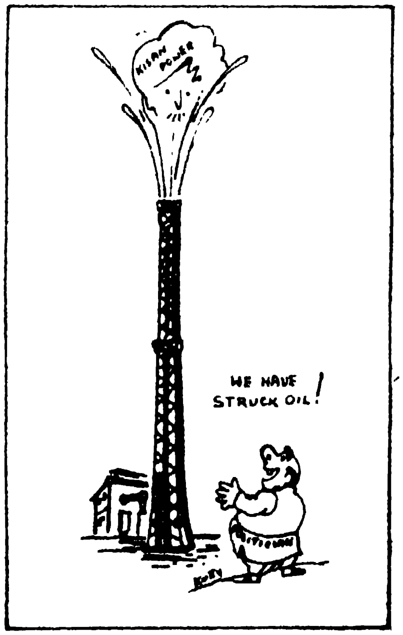
ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

YOUTH Congress(I) MLAs, who were to an extent responsible for the installation of Mr V. P. Singh as the chief minister of UP are feeling ditched. Initially, they were keeping quiet about their frustration and helplessness, but lately they have started to come out openly against the senior ministers of the state. For example: Mr Akbar Ahmed, a close associate of the late Sanjay Gandhi who had mooted the idea of Congress(I-Sanjay) in the UP Assembly to boost the political morale of Mrs Maneka Gandhi and Mrs Amteshwar Anand, has become the bitterest critic of Mr Brahm Dutt, minister for finance, power and planning and the second most powerful man, after the CM, in the UP cabinet.

Recently Mr Brahm Dutt went to Pantnagar, which is the Assembly constituency of Mr Akbar Ahmed. Mr Ahmed welcomed the minister at the airstrip and wanted to have a long chat with him. But the minister asked Ahmed to wait for him at the inspection house, while he went to attend some local functions and held several rounds of talks with the local Congress(I) workers. Mr Akbar Ahmed waited for him at the inspection house for five hours. And he was still sitting there when a *chaprasi* told him that the minister had already left for the airstrip and he would be flying back to Lucknow in a few minutes. Mr Ahmed got furious. Once upon a time Mr Ahmed was virtually ruling the state by proxy; now the same Youth Congress(I) leader was being treated in such a manner by a cabinet minister! Perhaps he had forgotten that the days of his gang were over. He lodged a written protest against Mr Brahm Dutt to the chief minister. But the CM also seems to have ignored these princes.

WAS MR KHURANA RELUCTANT?

ACCORDING to our sources, Mr Sundar Lal Khurana, who has been in his time chief secretary of Rajasthan and home secretary of the union government, was a little reluctant to take over from Mr Jagmohan as the new Lt. Governor of the capital. First, there was the question of bureaucratic concern for rank and seniority. Mr Jagmohan, before he made the gubernatorial grade, had just the rank of a joint secretary. Then there was the ticklish question of stepping into Mr Jagmohan's shoes. The job of looking after the capital, which is chockful of VIPs and always at the centre of some storm or the other, is not an easy one—even for a man who weathered the difficult days of the Emergency (Mr Khurana was home secretary during those days) and its aftermath. It is certainly no place to relax. Moreover, Mr Khurana is leaving an excellent job in order to take up what is, for all practical purposes, an inportant political assignment: he was the chief executive of the *Hindustan Times* group, which of course is owned by the Birlas. Mr Khurana also knows the problems of being a government servant well enough. He told the Shah Commission that though he was appointed home secretary a few days before the proclamation of the Emergency, he had no inkling about the appointment till after the announcement.



COMRADES AT JANPATH

On the evening of 31 March, Mr J. R. Ganesh and Mr Mohit Sen were seen having a long chat at the Open House restaurant of the capital's Janpath hotel. Mr Ganesh is the convenor of the Congress(I) sponsored "Friends of the Soviet Union" and Mr Sen is one of the few pro-Dange members of the CPI national council. Was the meeting held to discuss a strategy to stop Mr Dange's expulsion from the CPI?

CRUEL JOKE

MONDAY 27 March said the date. The appointed time: 4.30 pm. The address given belonged to a posh New Delhi area. The alleged occasion: the "wedding" of a central minister to a lady who is well connected with the Delhi press. These were the details of an "invitation card" posted to plenty of VIPs and journalists of the capital: indeed, the people posting the card, according to the names written there, were supposed to be none other than the parents of the lady, and the card carried the 'best compliments' from relatives and friends.

It was a vulgar and cruel joke on the minister and the lady; the minister, for some reason, has been the victim of such a scurrilous campaign even in the past. It would have been obvious to any reasonable intelligence that the card was a fake. Nevertheless, there was inbuilt evidence too to show that the "invitation" was a prank. 27 March this year was not a Monday but a Friday. Incidentally, the last time 27 March fell on a Monday was in 1978. Was anybody getting subtle?

NATIONAL, NOT MUSLIM, LEADER

ON 26 March there was an interesting dinner at energy minister A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhuri's house: 27 Congress(I) Muslim MPs had been invited. But only seven of them turned up. Mr Choudhuri is not on the best of terms with quite a few of the Muslim MPs: people as varied as Syed Mir Qasim, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Gufran Azam and Tariq Anwar have their own reasons for this. The latest irritation is that Mr Khan Choudhuri is giving his patronage to a young Youth Congress(I) leader who has been suspended from the organisation for six years by Azad on corruption charges. They are even trying to approach Mrs Gandhi and tell her about this. But Mr Choudhuri is riding high these days. Among other things, he has told the PM that he does not want to be treated as a leader of just Muslims, but as a national leader. He has even sent a note repeating the cliche that Muslims should be treated at par with other Indians; for too long had they remained outside the national mainstream. It was time they became part of the nation. Not the most careful use of language.

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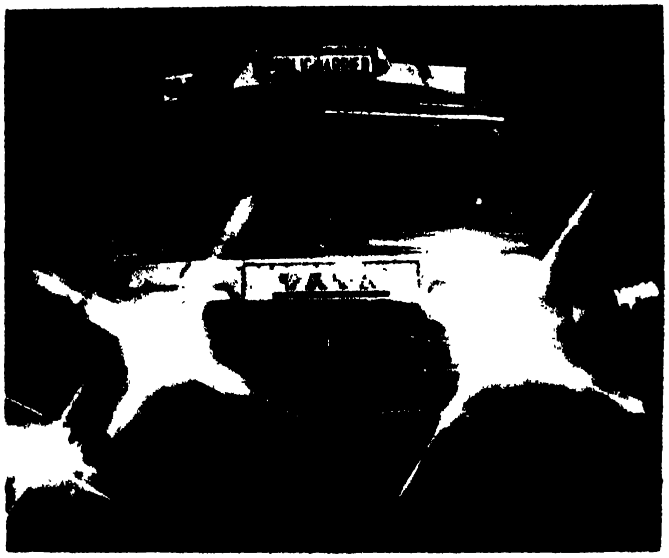

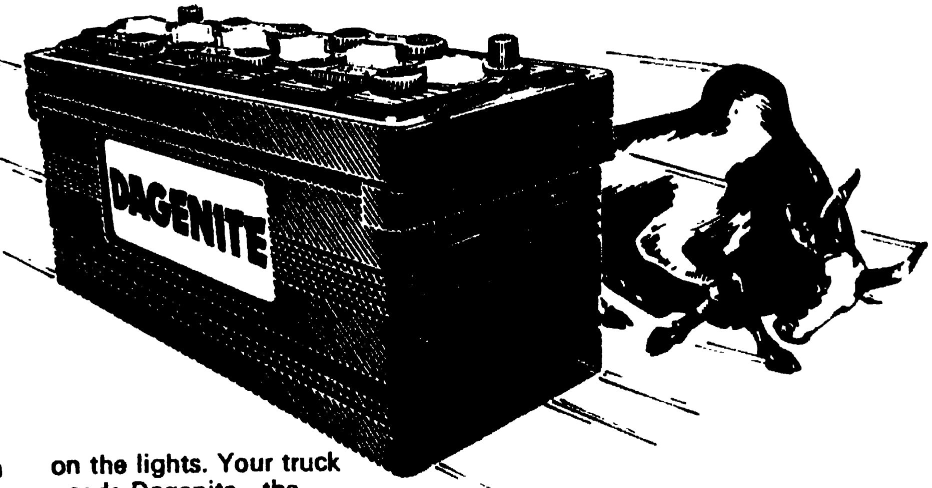

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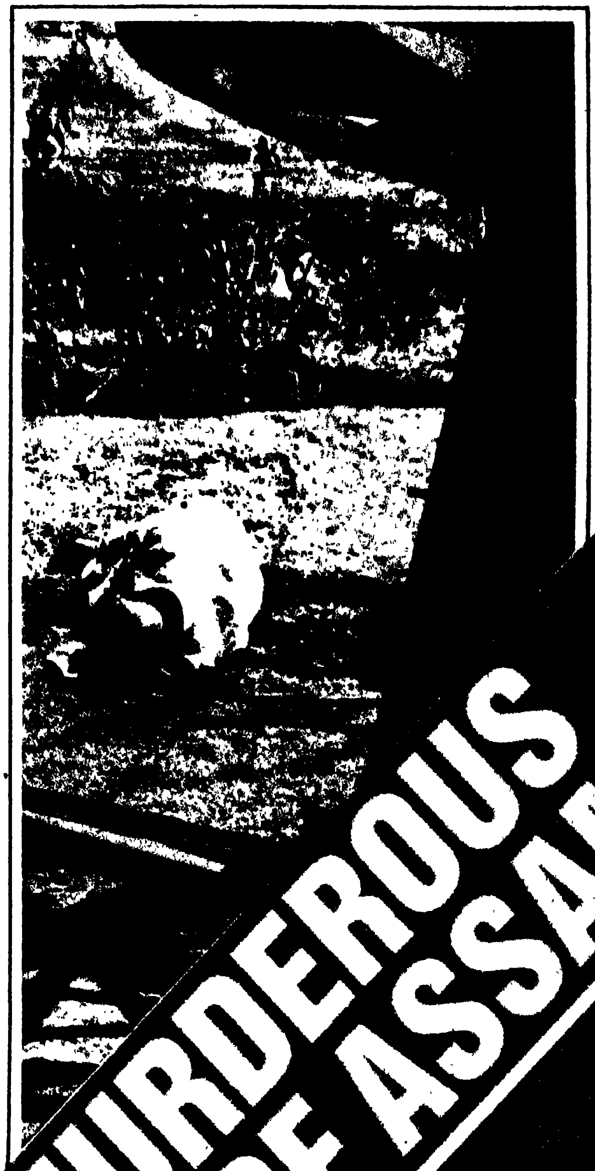
SUNDAY

DEATH AT NIPANI



THE MURDEROUS BOMBS OF ASSAM

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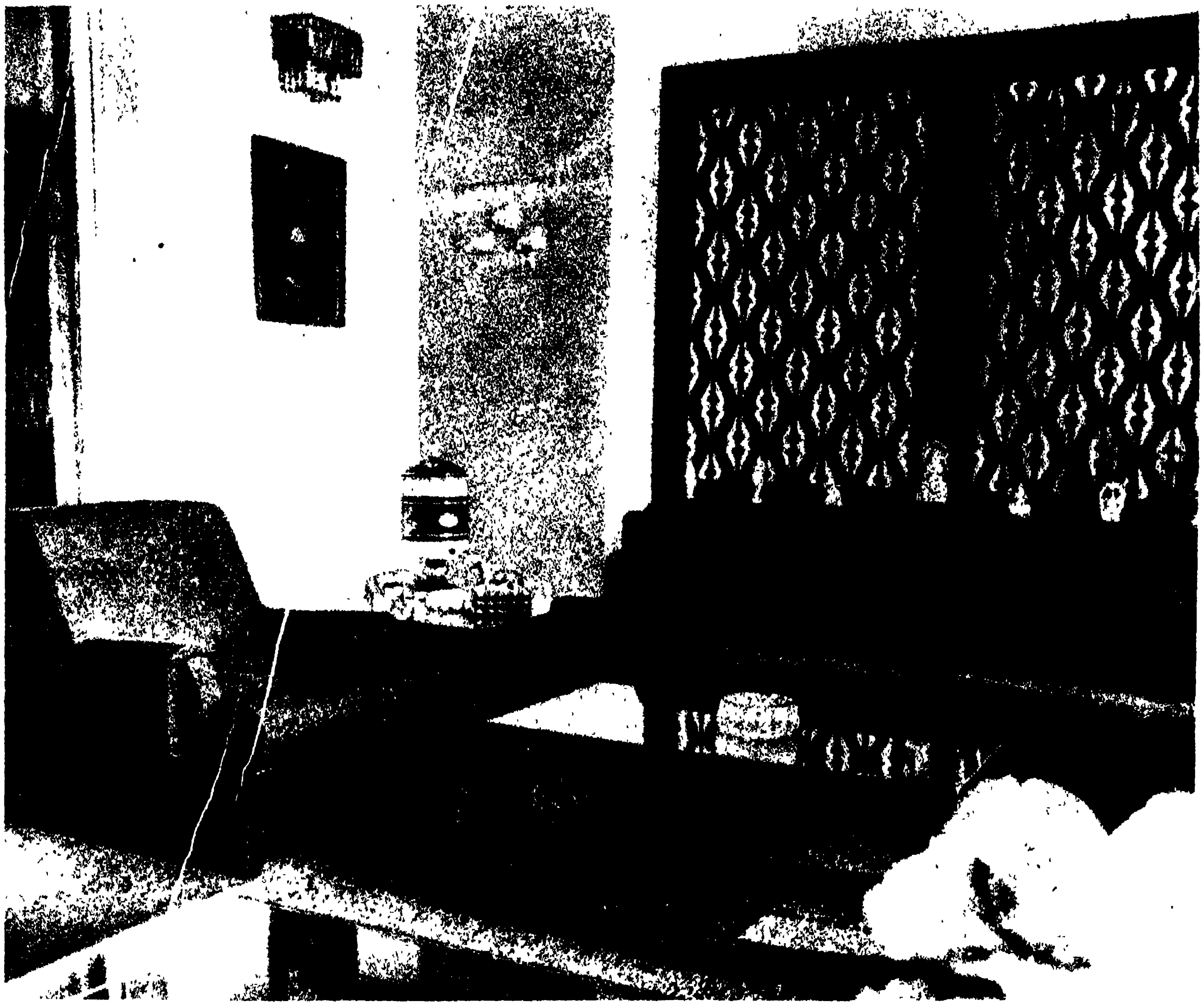

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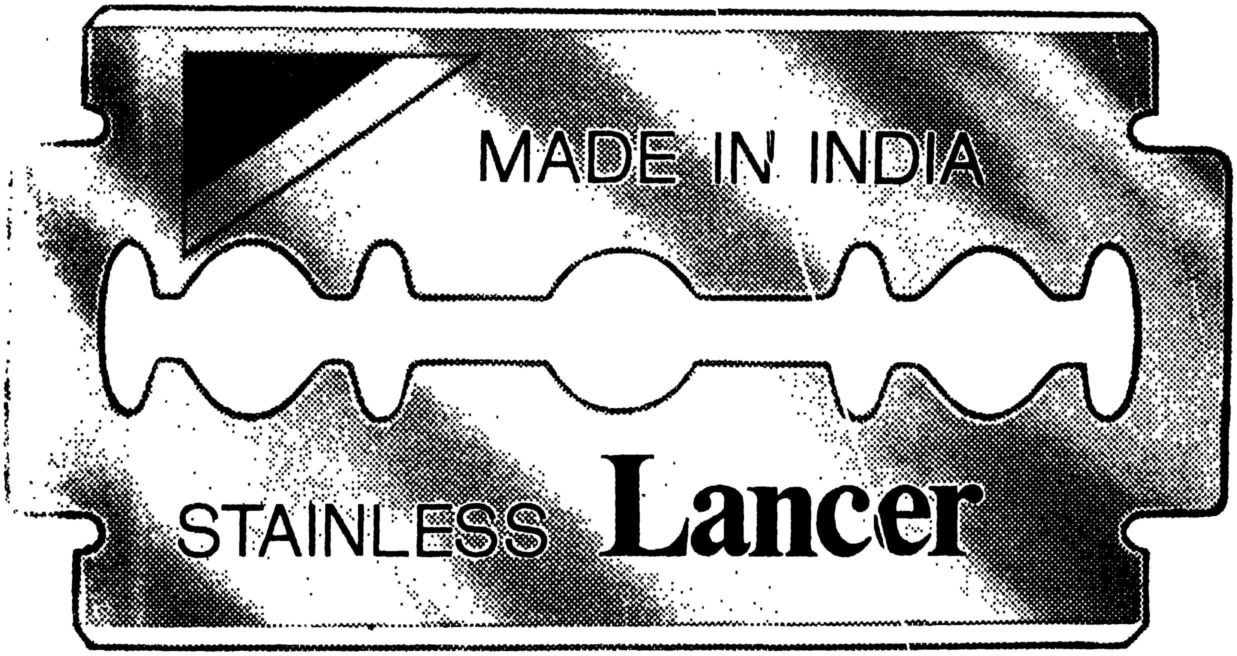

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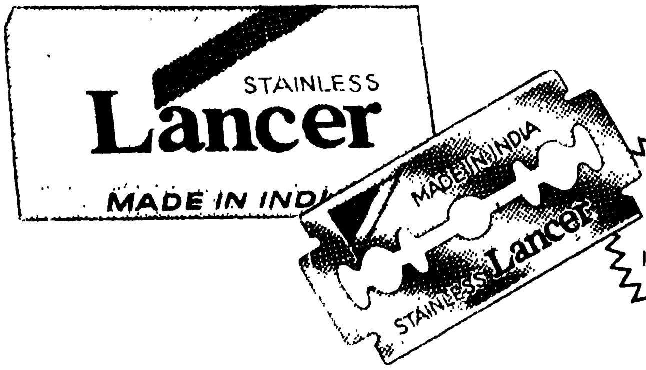

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SUNDAY VOLUME 8
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April 26, 1981

On 6 April, the agitating tobacco growers in Nipani, Karnataka, paid dearly for demanding better prices for their produce. The police opened fire on a crowd of 10,000 unarmed villagers gathered on the Pune-Bangalore highway, killing 12. Louise Fernandes visited Nipani to file an on-the-spot report. **Page 10**

The grenade blast that killed Upper Assam's divisional commissioner, E S. Parthasarathi, brutally announced a new phase of the Assam movement: the terrorists have taken over from the *satyagrahis* What is even more serious is that they are being helped by hardened insurgents from other states. **Page 20**

On 9 May, when Nepal's voters go to the polls, they will not really have a choice. Supporters of the multiparty system have decided to boycott the elections. Bhola Chatterji describes the pre-poll despondency in the country and talks to a still hopeful B. P. Koirala. **Page 32**

Is there life anywhere else in this universe? The answer to this question and many others about the universe will now be known with the help of a cheap new machine that can observe the Milky Way by detecting radio signals. **Page 39**

The arrest of a number of persons by the CBI has revealed a stunning tale of how secret documents of the Thal-Vaishet fertiliser project were leaked out. We put together the full story of how the ammonia plants at Thal- Vaishet and Hazira are being set up: it is literally, a blow by blow account. **Page 14**

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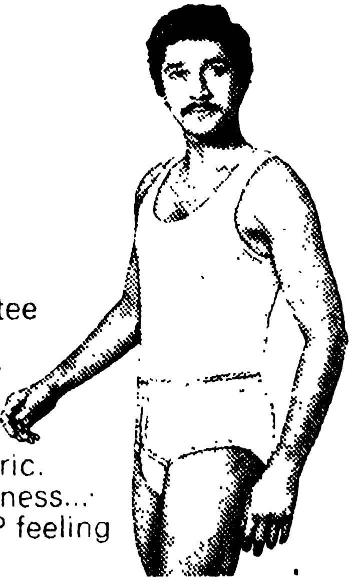

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The Government

Surrender to vanaspati industry

The former union minister for civil supplies, Mr V. C. Shukla, failed to control vanaspati prices and at the end of his two-month voluntary agreement with the vanaspati industry in March, the price of the cooking medium began to rise above the agreed ceiling of Rs 192 per tin of 16.5 kg (ex-factory). Mr Shukla lost his job for 'non-performance' and now Rao Birendra Singh, the agriculture minister, who is holding charge of civil supplies, has entered into a new agreement with the industry, taking vanaspati prices back to Rs 192 per tin. But there is a catch in this. The new agreement has been reached at a cost which is not being highlighted. The government will again supply 70 per cent of the industry's requirement of vegetable oils through imports, thus restoring the 15 per cent cut Mr Shukla had imposed since 1 January. Stocks of imported vegetable oil, available for distribution through fair price shops, will go down. Is not this surrender to the industry's demand worse than Shukla's non-performance?

No hope on cement

The government seems to be actually working for a lower cement output. It has slashed furnace oil supplies to cement units from a promised 7,000 to 10,000 tonnes a month to a mere 700 to 1000 tonnes. As only six or seven cement units in the country have the oil firing equipment necessary for switching over from oil to coal fuel the plight of the rest of the units which rely solely on furnace oil as fuel can be imagined. But those lucky few who can switch over to coal are actually no better off as coal itself is in short supply.

Imported furnace oil used to be subsidised with funds from the cement regulation account. But this account is fast drying up as the heavy national cement import bill is also being met out of it. The account was originally meant to pay for freight equalisation in cement. Things will not get better in 1981-82 as cement imports will be as heavy as the previous year's two million tonnes.

Quick second thoughts

Within two months of deciding to canalise the import of copper and brass scrap through the MMTC, the government has again placed these items under the open general licence. The new import policy says that this change is necessary as it will not be possible for the MMTC to make bulk purchases of these items from the world market. If that were so then the government would surely have been aware of it earlier. The real reason seems to be pressure from powerful industrialists who found the earlier arrangement preferable. The new decision is a rude shock to the MMTC who have already invited tenders and placed orders for 300 tonnes of copper scrap and were only waiting for government instructions for its distribution. Copper and brass scrap imports were originally canalised, through the MMTC to ensure regular supplies to all users, both big and small.

Invitation to "slaughter farming"

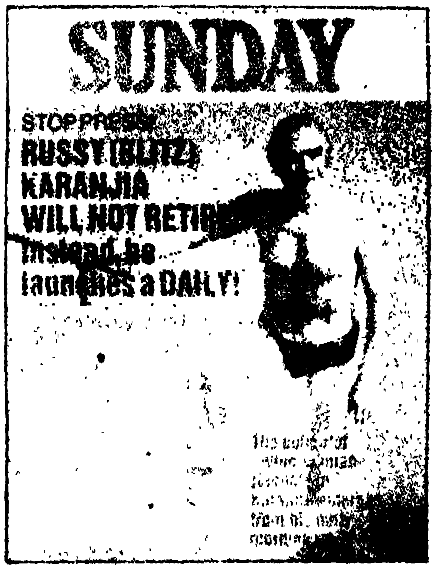
For reasons best known to the government itself, the wealth tax on plantations is still being continued despite collection falling far short of the expenditure incurred on collecting it. This is borne out by the 147th report of the Public Accounts Committee (1978-79). A senior central government official told the committee: "It (agricultural wealth tax) is not separately accounted... I think the cost of collection in this case will definitely be high in relation to the other taxes which the central government is administering today." His subsequent observation that "one can always find an argument for retaining a tax despite its low yield" underlines the futility of this levy. Planters contend that there is hardly any economic basis for continuing the farm wealth tax. Less than 12,000 people are assessed and their number is going down. The yield of less than Rs one crore from this levy accounts for barely 0.06 per cent of the total central tax proceeds.

As plantation crops like tea, coffee, rubber and cardamom are the most organised, the taxman's axe falls most heavily on them. Growers of these crops have to pay central and agricultural income tax and, except in the case of rubber, none of the plantation products is allowed depreciation on field assets. Manufacturing industry, on the other hand, is allowed to charge depreciation on its plant and machinery. The wealth tax, coupled with the absence of depreciation allowance, acts as a disincentive to the expansion and development of plantation property. Is this not an open government invitation to conduct "slaughter farming" by which plantations are slowly run down to extract the maximum immediate gain from them.

Operation documentary

Plans to hold an international festival of short films at Calcutta in January 1982 as part of the Filmotsav '82 programme appear to have been approved by the ministry of information and broadcasting. This decision reflects yet another effort on the part of the Indian government to revitalise the Indian documentary film, a media-extension of the government's policies which suffers from low credibility.

If the short film festival comes through in January it will be a feather in the cap of the present team running the I and B ministry. Plans for such a festival were proposed in vain during the tenures of three previous ministers—I. K. Gujral, V. C. Shukla and L. K. Advani.



Dangerous madness

The barbarities committed against harijans in Gujarat (*The senseless intolerance of caste Hindus,* 22 March) are a challenge to civilised society. If the Indian Constitution protects the interests of harijans, it is because they deserve protection. For ages, they have been tortured, humiliated, cursed. The reason for reservations is that there can be no competition between the healthy and disabled. The medicos' agitation is nothing but madness.
Krishnanandan Thakur, Chakradharpur, Bihar

In India, democracy is the other name for brahminocracy. As long as this state of affairs continues, social status will depend on the accident of birth. Reservations on the basis of caste and community will have to continue to set right the wrongs committed against oppressed sections. As for reservations on the basis of income, they would prove futile; it is not hard to get "poverty certificates" in our country.
Poonkodi Selvan, Thiruvaiyaru

The medicos' agitation is hitting at the very roots of democracy and national integrity. The Dalits, who are economically, socially and educationally backward, are not in a position to sustain themselves. Religion, instead of honouring them, degrades them physically and psychologically. The reservation system is a byproduct of the famous Poona Pact, signed by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr B. R. Ambedkar at Yervada Poona Jail, on 23 September 1932. Dr Ambedkar was then fighting tooth and nail to secure separate electorates for lower castes. But Gandhiji protested against the suggestion by starting a fast unto death. Ultimately, Dr Ambedkar gave up his demand to save Gandhiji's life. Had he not given in, India's map today would have been different.

The medicos' arguments are weak. To say that reservation for Dalits is lowering the standard of education is stupid; do not students with low percentages who pay capitation fees of one to two lakh rupees also get admission? It is argued that reservations have created a small elite among the Dalits themselves. Every caste, community and class has its own elite; why single out Dalits? That reservations have not benefited the vast majority of people is no reason why they should be cancelled. If this agitation goes on, the Dalits will be forced to demand a separate state.
P. S. M. Bharti, Delhi

Our hypocritical politicians should make a genuine effort to thrash out an effective programme for the uplift of oppressed sections.
T. K. Malhotra, Delhi

We speak of Mahatma Gandhi's ideals and from time to time swear by them, yet little is done to change the status of those whose cause was dear to Gandhiji. It is ironical that a handful of harijans who have acquired a higher economic status continue to enjoy privileges, while those who are impoverished continue to live below the poverty line. It is the poor who are subjected to humiliation and torture. Rich feudal lords enslave them and do not hesitate to kill them as happened in Belchi, Pipra and Parasbigha. Affluent politicians who claim to represent them capitalise on their sad plight and exploit them for their own selfish ends. It is time a determined effort was made to eradicate the evils of casteism and discrimination. Reservation in jobs should continue for the economically backward. Simultaneously those who have attained social status should forfeit the concessions. An effort should be made to help those who need help the most. One such idea is to withdraw these concessions for the dependants of gazetted SC/ST officers. They should continue for each according to his ability, instead of each according to his caste.
Jasvinder Singh, Delhi

After this story, and his coverage of Jamshedpur, Moradabad and Aligarh riots, it is clear that Mr Akbar does not leave a single opportunity to discredit Hindus.
R. L. Hansia, Purulia, West Bengal

An institution should be started to coach depressed class candidates for competitive examinations and tests. Industrialists, philanthropists and the government should help with free land and other necessities.
C. V. Ganesh, Madras

It is caste Hindus who cannot tolerate jobs and privileges for those who have long been spat at and denied opportunities and money. What they forget is that they continue to enjoy the worst form of monopoly—of social privileges.
B. Ghosh, Calcutta

Is it not a shame that even after 33 years of independence, harijans have no rights? True, among other castes too there are poor people; but how many of them are prevented from drawing drinking water from public wells? How many of them are killed, raped and burnt to death for refusing to work or claiming equality?
S. Lakshminarasimhan, Bangalore

The southern states, especially Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, are more favourably disposed to reservations than the casteist north. What happened during Karpoori Thakur's regime in Bihar? And why does Indira Gandhi openly support the backwards, SCs and STs in the south, while indirectly helping the forwards in the north?
Perooru Jaru, Bangalore

I do not think caste Hindus will ever realise what being a harijan means unless they are made to till land, shave their heads and beg at street corners.
V. Vairamoorthy, Madras

If the caste system (*Origins of caste*) was brought into India by the Aryans, why is it absent among the Europeans who are also of Aryan stock? If the caste system was formulated to keep the fairskinned Aryans distinguishable from the dark aborigines, how are there so many dark brahmins? A code such as the one laid down by Manu can only be followed in a society which is already sufficiently complex. The so-called superior status of brahmins and the plight of the untouchables have been overemphasised. As for reservations, the real cause of the strong feeling against them is stiff competition for the seats and jobs; many persons with lower qualifications often get through due to the quota.
A. K. Ghosh, Calcutta

When the Aryans came to India, there was no caste system as such among them. Instead, they were classed as warriors *(kshatriyas)*, priests *(brahmins)* and common people (*vaishyas*), according to their professions, which were not hereditary. Intermarriage and interdining were not disallowed. The *varna* system emerged when the Aryans started settling in the Gangetic basin and came into conflict with natives. The Aryans were fair-complexioned and the natives dark. The difference between the two was viewed in terms of *varna*(colour). By this time, a nomadic, pastoral and comparatively egalitarian Aryan society began transforming itself into a stratified agricultural society. Gradually, the society became more broadbased and varied. Agriculture, handicrafts and trade flourished. The *kshatriya* king provided protection to the people, and was thus entitled to collect a part of the surplus produce as tax. The *brahmin* priests imposed divinity on the king and convinced the people that it was a part of religious duty to pay the king tax and offer gifts to priests. The *brahmins* soon became the most important persons in society—the spiritual guardians. It was to perpetuate this new order that the caste system was devised.
Anjan Goswami, Calcutta

Journalist extraordinary

To quote R K. Karanjia (*Colourful Karanjia's breakthrough Daily*, 22 March) "I drink, I womanise, I do everything. Why should one get old mentally, physically or sexually?" Like *Sunday*, Karanjia's *Blitz* is a powerful weekly. We hope *The Daily*, too, will blaze a new trail in Indian journalism.
D. Sengupta, Howrah

It hurt me to see a drenched, nude Russy Karanjia on your front cover. I cannot understand this journalism. What is so extraordinary about a nude Karanjia that you should print such a picture? Do not damage *Sunday*'s image by selling nudity.
Ranbir Singh, Rohtak, Haryana

I recall Mr Karanjia's song about the "rose" in the fifties. When the flower withered and the bud came into full bloom, he sang of the "return of the rose." But as he reached for the "rose", a thorn pricked his finger; so he sang of the "thorn". Mr Karanjia's philosophy was aptly summed up by an Urdu poet: *"Badnam honge, to kya nam na hoga!"* (even notoriety means fame, after all).
S. N. Shivapuri, Calcutta

Some errors

The south's arrack scandal (1 February) contains a number of factual errors. In this report you have posed a question "Why did Kerala's CM E. K. Nayanar allow private parties to get the RS? And that too when the private party was a person very close to the PA to the excise minister?" The CM has not allowed any such thing. The government has only given Mannom Sugar Mills, a state-owned venture, the necessary permission and it is the Mills which has worked out other things. The government does not at all come into picture. The government has not discussed any offer from Ahmad Khan nor has the cabinet given any green signal to Khan. The government does not issue and has not issued any RS import permits to any private interest.

The CM had never issued a denial on the question of a probe. The opposition had proposed different things at different times, enquiry by a legislative committee, judicial enquiry, CBI enquiry etc. The CM had repeatedly made it clear that the exact form of enquiry could be decided once the police had gone into the matter.

The arrack racket was exposed for the first time, through a detailed report published in the CPI(M) organ *Desabhimani* (10 August 1980). The detection of smuggling of arrack took place during the third week of November. Here too, it was *Desabhimani* which came out with the news first. It was after the police enquiry had advanced and some of the big shots were traced that the issue was raised in the Kerala legislature on 31 December, giving the whole issue a political twist.

The CM and the cabinet, in keeping with the commitment, has already declared a judicial enquiry into the matter and the name of a sitting judge of the Kerala High Court has been recommended for the enquiry. The centre's clearance in the matter is awaited.
K. T. Zacharias, Press Secretary to Chief Minister, Trivandrum.

Biblical story

Destroy Libya (22 March) the extract from *The Fifth Horseman* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre reads like history told in advance, like Sir John Hackett's *The Third World War*. What is of special interest to me is the symbolic title of the book, which has a biblical connection. The Bible's first book of Revelation, written towards the close of the first century by the apostle John, who was exiled on the little penal island of Patmos, in the Aegian Sea, beheld in quick succession four galloping horses. The first was a white horse; the man on it had a bow, was given a crown and went forth conquering (internal evidence points [illegible] Lord Jesus Christ as being this horseman). Next a fiery-coloured horse came forth, holding a pair of scales which symbolised acute scarcity of life's bare necessities. The fourth and last, rode a pale mount which represented death, with hell in tow. In accordance with the Bible's prophecy the outbreak of World War I and its aftermath clearly indicated that the four horsemen had begun to ride forth. The year 1914 ushered in an age of violence, the like of which was never seen before—what the Bible calls the "time of the end". Today it is not just a city like New York or Moscow or Tokyo, but the whole human race which faces a thermonuclear Armageddon. However, the Bible clearly shows that Armageddon is not a war between nations but God's war against all militarised nations of the world.
Allwyn R. Johns, Calcutta

Class in the way

What a splendid revelation of the class character of Barun Sengupta! (*Mrs Gandhi gets tough*, 1 February). Perhaps Mr Sengupta is unaware of the background and genesis of the struggle of the Indian working class against capitalists. Whatever be the pay structure of a nationalised bank or in ONGC or Indian Airlines, it is an achievement of the working class. Mr Sengupta argues that a *chaprasi* in a nationalised bank gets more than a professor; by the same token the remuneration of the President or PM should have been Rs five lakhs a month, keeping in mind the salary and other benefits at least one journalist manages to get from a big publication house. While acclaiming Mrs Gandhi's LIC ordinance, Mr Sengupta suggests more repressive measures to keep her in power. What then was wrong with the Emergency? Besides, if Mr Sengupta is so vocal in attacking the salaried people, why does he not utter a word about the special bearer bonds?
Ranjit Roy, Agartala, Tripura

Colonialism continues

The racism of the British makers of Gandhi (15 March) did not surprise me. As I, and many others know, "bloody Indian" is a common expression among many Britons. I myself confronted this term once, but gave it back to the foreigner, a renowned British photographer Marlo Peto, who had come to India to shoot a film on our population problem. The ministry of health and family welfare had sent him to the National Institute of Family Planning, New Delhi, to be shown suitable locations for his film. As photographer of the institute, I was assigned to "do the needful." The gentleman was shown around the entire Mehrauli block, the then field practice and demonstration area of the institute. After shooting some footage, Mr Peto asked me to take him to slums, like those on Qutab Road etc. When I humbly asked if slums were part of his film's script, he got angry and said it was none of my business. I very coldly said that he was not going to shoot a single foot of film to malign this country. I asked two Indian photographers accompanying the foreigner (quite well-known names which I shall not mention) as to what they felt about the matter. They were silent. This shows that the hangover of the Raj still persists in the minds of Britons (as rulers) and Indians (as subjects).
Rajinder Singh, New Delhi

Wronged Catholics

I do not belong to either of the communities mentioned in *"No more Tamil priests?"* (8 March), but having lived for long in Bangalore, I strongly sympathise with Kannada Catholics and agree that they have been neglected. Although Bangalore has a large number of Tamil Catholics, the surrounding towns and villages are dominated by Kannada speaking people. I have myself attended several Kannada Catholic protest meets but I do not believe that the effigy of Archbishop Arokiaswamy was burnt. Some aggressive young Kannadigas wanted to burn his effigy but the elders dissuaded them from doing so. Instead they burnt the effigy of Anti-Kannadiga. The fact remains, the archbishop is unpopular among Kannada Catholics.
K. Gomez, Madras

Conform, or quit

One is at a loss to understand your sympathy for Bohra reformers (*Bohra reformers conference*, 1 March) who in the name of religious reform, are destroying religion and preaching atheism. The proper course for them is to convert to another religion, rather than hurt the religious sentiments of the faithful. It is distressing that your paper does not care for the religious sentiments of the majority of Muslims.
M. H. Kidwai, Aligarh

Last Letter

Question: *Albert Pinto ko gussa kyon ata hai?*
Answer: Because he is too much of an intellectual.
Mohd. Tarique, Calcutta

DEATH AT NIPANI

On 6 April, police at Nipani, Karnataka, replied to the cries of 30,000 farmers for better tobacco prices—by shooting 12 of them dead.

Louise Fernandes reports from Nipani.

"We are the kites and the strings are held by the merchants and traders. We have no life, no strength, sometimes he (trader/merchant) takes us up and sometimes down." This is how Elia, a tobacco farmer of village Akola, near Nipani, a town in the Belgaum district of Karnataka, described the condition of the farmers of this tobacco country. It was hardly a surprise, therefore, that the tobacco farmers of this area finally organised themselves under the banner of the Shetkari Sanghatana headed by Mr Sharad Joshi and launched an agitation on 14 March. Their chief demand: better prices for their produce. But instead of better prices, 23 days later the farmers had to pay with their lives for fighting for their rights when on the morning of 6 April the police decided that their bullets would end the agitation. They launched an assault on the unarmed villagers, and opened fire—killing 12.

The agitation had been successful and the form novel. Nearly 30,000 farmers had participated in a *satyagraha* and squatted on a four km route on the Bangalore-Pune national highway, near Nipani, to make themselves heard. The scene at the site of the *satyagraha* was even reminiscent of a *jatra*—43 villages were represented and each group came well prepared for a long stay—some even brought their own entertainment troupes. There were no less than 200 such groups, and about 500 musical instruments kept spirits alive during the arduous hours of *dharna*. The blockade was very effective: interstate traffic had to be diverted, and the supply of essential commodities to Nipani had come to a halt. The government seemed to have no idea about what to do. So it took recourse to the option of force.

The police were told to take action and break the agitation. "The decision was an administrative one. But at what level I am not willing to answer," Mr Chandulal, DIG, Belgaum told SUNDAY. He continued, "The decision was to clear the highway and arrest all the agitators." The date when the police would strike was fixed: 6 April. The arrangements were made. An estimate of the number of people to be arrested was first drawn up. The authorities thought they would have to arrest around 2,000 people—a relatively small number, but as 5 April was *Ugadi*, the Kannada new year's day, the police were not expecting a very large turnout of agitators on 6 April. Accordingly, on the night before the arrests, 43 buses were moved near the site of the *satyagraha* and at three am on the morning of 6 April, Mr T. Madiyal, SP Belgaum, informed Mr Sharad Joshi of the decision to arrest the agitators and clear the highway. He also made a request: could Mr Joshi persuade the agitators not to offer any resistance?

Two hours after Mr Madiyal had spoken to Mr Sharad Joshi, the arrests began and by 10.30 am 2,015 agitators had been loaded into buses and sent off to jail. Mr Joshi was one of the first to be arrested at 6.30 am. "He (Mr Joshi) shook hands with me before boarding the bus at around 6.30 in the morning. He did not ask to be the last to be arrested as has been reported in a section of the press," said Mr Madiyal.

The entire operation went off peacefully; the agitators did not offer any resistance. But as word of the arrests spread to the nearby villages,

▲ A casualty of the police firing trying farmers in large numbers began swarming towards the scene of the *satyagraha*. The atmosphere became tense and police thought there could be mob violence. They were unprepared to tackle this new situation. They neither had the buses to take more people away, nor a sufficient force to tackle the growing crowd of villagers. But by 11 am, the crowd had swelled to an impressive 10,000, and it was an angry crowd. They started shouting slogans against the police; the more daring among them even tried to reoccupy the highway. But the police would not allow this. The 250 policemen present at the scene formed a cordon with *lathis* to prevent the villagers. It was at this time that a stray stone hit a police officer on the head. He collapsed. And then began the angry police reprisal. They started with a *lathi* charge, then teargas (about 100 rounds), and then came the bullets—into the crowd.

Said Sarju Katkar, the only newsman present at the scene, "I don't think the people had realised that real bullets had replaced teargas shells, till they saw blood-splattered bodies fall to the ground." Once they realised what was happening, the villagers began scattering in all directions. But by then it was too late for some—the bullets had already claimed 12 lives.

LOUISE FERNANDES

The hut near the highway where the villagers ran for cover. The bullet marks are encircled

Today, there is a sense of helplessness among the villagers, especially the women whose menfolk have been killed. Besides, the evidence of the tragedy is visible everywhere. Lakshman Sakaram Pundekar of village Galatga, who had supported the agitation, now has only one son. His two other sons died in the police firing. Thirty-eight-year old Nanasaheb Daji Chavan languishes in Bellary central jail, unaware that his brother, Dinkar Daji Chavan, is no longer alive and the villagers seem convinced that this is only the beginning of police terror.

But for the tobacco growers of Nipani, what hurt more than the bullets was the total apathy of the government to their demands: total takeover of the tobacco purchasing by the government through a body like the Nafed, or the announcement of support prices so that the government could step in when the prices came down. Today, the tobacco growers, 80 per cent of whom grow tobacco on small holdings, are at the mercy of traders and merchants who buy tobacco from the farmers at rates ranging from Rs two to Rs eight per kg. The Shetkari Sanghatana has worked out

The scene of the satyagraha: Pune-Bangalore national highway after the police firing on 6 April

[illegible] average cost of production of Rs [illegible] 40 per kg, and demanded prices ranging from Rs seven to Rs 14 per kg. Babasaheb Sarawarde, for instance, who has been cultivating four acres of land for the past ten years, has little to show for his efforts. If anything, he has become impoverished! He has to repay a bank loan of Rs 2,000, and another [illegible] borrowed from friends. "They [illegible] our goods but when we ask for money they don't even look at us. They use our money to buy gold and land," said Abhay Kumar Aute, a B.Sc. graduate and a tobacco grower. This injustice had led the farmers to unite in the past but unsuccessfully. It was only when Mr Sharad Joshi and the Shetkari Sanghatana mobilised the tobacco growers that they launched a successful agitation. "We had tried to come together several times since 1972," said B R Patil of Bhoj, the village that grows the best snuff tobacco. "But each time we were crushed by the traders and the merchants who punished us by a boycott: they would not buy our tobacco. Now for the first time we have all been united by Sharad Joshi."

When Mr Sharad Joshi first tried to mobilise the farmers, people were frightened to come out on the streets. He had held 40 meetings in 11 days before the agitation began. On 13 March, the eve of the agitation, the government clamped section 144 in Chikodi *taluka*, and the atmosphere seemed uncertain. But then everything changed. As a [illegible] police officer said, "We were going to arrest Joshi on the 13th night and then quietly disperse the crowd on the 14th. But then in the night, people started pouring in from all directions onto the highway. We were taken aback. In fact, we spent around Rs 1,000 on wireless messages to the [illegible] government and [illegible] changed [illegible] and [illegible] to watch and wait, [illegible] the people escalated [illegible] to neigh[illegible] villages. In places like [illegible] and Kagal in Kolhapur [illegible] people put up road blocks [illegible]ously—and independent[illegible]

The [illegible] in the novel [illegible] transforming the scene of the [illegible] one of *jatra* [illegible] with [illegible] bolster morale [illegible]. As Sharad [illegible] he was [illegible] the [illegible] potential force [illegible] giving courage [illegible] people. Have you [illegible] large number of women [illegible] on *satyagraha* [illegible] there were [illegible] involved)? I disc[illegible] [illegible] near Cha[illegible] [illegible] first *mor*[illegible] people came [illegible] even[illegible] became [illegible] of

COURTESY TARUN BHARAT

Sharad Joshi and his wife at Nipani

[illegible] into the fields to [illegible]

LOUISE FERNANDES

Lakshman Sakaram Pundekar (standing second from left) and his family.

from the night-club culture of 'India.' It was literally a way of life from which we have gone away through contact with Western culture. This latent culture has been used by various reformers like Ramdas who established statues of Hanuman, the god of strength, in every village. Tilak did the same. This agitation in which we have put thousands of people on the road is evidence of their latent culture in full bloom. The traditions of Dyaneshwar and Tukaram have been associated in their minds with the agitation and it appears to give them tremendous moral strength." But he hastened to add, "This awakening will not lead to confirmation of blind faith. You can use the spirit of the old cult of devotion without any revival of old objects of devotion."

The government's initial reaction to this massive show of force was to wait. Only once was a five-member delegation called to Bangalore for talks with chief minister Gundu Rao, and was given the Antulay-like excuse that "We are in agreement with many of your grievances but it is for the centre to give the green signal." No discussions were held on basic issues: the effort, labour and the cost of growing tobacco. And tobacco is a very fussy crop. From April to August farmers prepare for the season. Between June and August they make a nursery. There are 4,000 plants per acre and plants cost Rs 35 per 1,000. It costs Rs 120 to plant a single acre. Transplanting takes place in August and requires 10 labourers per acre. Cultivation of tobacco requires a lot of labour because shoots which grow on the sides have to be constantly cut every eight days; every 15 days the plants have to be sprayed. It costs Rs 150 to water one acre and watering has to be done twice. Yet, after all this it is the trader who makes the money.

But the trader, of course, disagrees. "We are just the middlemen. We don't make money, we don't fix prices. This is upto the manufacturers," said a prominent tobacco trader in Nipani. But what he did not mention were the methods used in grading and pricing the tobacco for which he is clearly responsible. Tobacco is measured in *bodhas* (each *bodha* is equal to about 45 kgs). For every *bodha*, five kgs are deducted as the traders maintain that the same amount of *kadimathi* (waste matter) is mixed with the tobacco. Another four to six kgs are deducted as *bardan soot* (weight of the bags). As a result, when a farmer sells 45 kgs of tobacco, he is paid for only 30 kgs.

Not just this, when a farmer asks for cash payment on the spot, he is given the sum after 10 per cent is deducted. Take the case of Jyanu Dhula Kahade of Akola village. According to Kahade, last year he sold 900 kgs of tobacco to Veerana Kothewale, a Nipani tobacco king. Deductions had been calculated at 294 kgs and Kothewale had agreed to pay Rs 10.10 per kg of tobacco. When Kahade protested that the deductions had been too steep, Kothewala magnanimously told him that the deductions would be reduced to 200 kgs—only on the condition that Kahade acepted Rs. 6.75 per kg as the rate. Kahade did not understand the calculations and accepted the terms. What he did not realise was that by accepting the trader's terms, he had actually received Rs 1,995 less than he would have got otherwise. Besides, farmers are cheated while grading the tobacco. At present, grading is left entirely to the *diwanji* (tobacco taster) who arbitrarily decides the grades. The farmers allege that the *diwanji* is often in the pay of the trader and deliberately downgrades the quality of the tobacco to bring down the prices. It was to prevent this type of exploitation that Sharad Joshi had mobilised the farmers.

In the meanwhile, shortly after the firing, some youths have written to the Prime Minister demanding better prices for tobacco, release of the arrested leaders and death sentence for the police officers involved in the firing of 6 April. The letter contains a very apt verse. It says: "*Desh hai yeh kisano ka/Kahate to ho tum/Kya chal raha hai yeh/Kyo mar rahe hai hum?*" (You say that this country belongs to the farmers. But what is actually going on? Why are we dying?) ■

A Shetkari Sanghatana procession through Nipani town

Money. Secret documents. Multinationals.

The full story of Thal-Vaishet

By SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA

The petroleum, chemicals and fertilisers ministry seems to be a slippery place for ministers, officials and liaison men. It was a case relating to this ministry, a deal with the French firm, CFP, regarding Bombay High, which led to the eventually abortive arrest of Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mr Prakash Chandra Sethi and the then petroleum secretary, Mr B.B. Vohra, in October 1978. Now another case relating to the ministry, concerning the award of a consultancy contract for the ammonia-process fertiliser projects at Thal-Vaishet in Maharashtra and Hazira in Gujarat has, over the past one year, become a major scandal which has shaken parliament and even threatens to take CBI raiding squads to the doorsteps of three prominent opposition politicians—Mr Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna, Bombay's Mr Rajni Patel and the Congress(U) general secretary, Mr K.P. Unnikrishnan, MP.

Mr Bahuguna was the petroleum minister when the Thal-Vaishet case was initially processed by experts of the ministry and the American firm, C.F. Braun, was chosen to provide the consultancy for all the four ammonia plants based on Bombay High gas at Thal-Vaishet and Hazira. Later, as the finance minister in the Charan Singh government, the final clearance to the deal with Braun was given by Mr Bahuguna. Mr Rajni Patel, a prominent kingmaker and fund-collector of yesteryears, and still a leading barrister, is close to Mr Bahuguna and a Bombay businessman, Mr Narendra Narottamdas Kapadia, whose firm, Industrial Consultancy Bureau (ICB), represents the interests of Braun in India. Mr Narendra Kapadia, popularly known as Mama Kapadia, is a former sheriff of Bombay and is reputed to have financed the Congress in the 1974 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections and the Gujarat polls in 1975, and it was in 1974, when Mr Bahuguna was Mrs Gandhi's party manager in UP (later he became the chief minister) that he came to know Mama Kapadia.

K.L. Arora leaves the court of O.P. Gogne, metropolitan magistrate

The reason why efforts are being made against the Congress(U) MP, Mr K.P. Unnikrishnan is that he produced photostat copies of secret documents of the petroleum ministry, including some decisions of a cabinet sub-committee, in the Lok Sabha on 23 December 1980 to prove his contention that the award of the contract for the four ammonia plants, which have now been given to a Danish firm Haldor Topsoe (which, in turn, is 50 per cent owned by the Italian firm, Snam Progetti) and a British firm Pullman Kellogg,was wrong and contrary to the recommendations of the experts' committees appointed by the government. The photostats surprised and embarrassed the government and immediately after Mr Unnikrishnan's disclosures, the petroleum minister, Mr P.C. Sethi told the Lok Sabha that "if a company like Braun has access to the government's office and files... then what would be the fate of the defence of the country? Therefore, this very fact—how did he (Unnikrishnan) get copies—requires a CBI probe..." (The minister never contradicted what Mr Unnikrishnan had said about the deal, but only ordered a probe to ascertain how he had managed to pierce the wall of the Official Secrets Act.)

The authorities swung into action soon after. The initial task of handling the investigations was given to none other than Mr T.V. Rajeswar, the director of the intelligence bureau who has been a trusted officer of Mrs Gandhi for long while.

A FIR was filed by the SIU(I) branch of the CBI in New Delhi at 12 noon on 6 March. The case (Crime No. RC2/81-SIU-I/SIC/CBI/SPE/NEW DELHI) was registered under section 5(1) A of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 and section 5(1) A read with section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947. The FIR said: "Reliable information has been received to the effect that information/documents of the classified nature, forming part of the files of the ministry of petroleum, chemicals and fertilisers (department of chemicals and fertilisers), government of India, relating to award of contracts for setting up of ammonia plants at Thal-Vaishet in the state of Maharashtra and Hazira in the state of Gujarat had been wilfully leaked to the outside unauthorised agencies which were quoted extensively by Shri K.P. Unnikrishnan, MP, during discussion under rule 193 in the Lok Sabha on 23 December 1980."

On 8 March the CBI arrested Mr K.L. Arora, the personal-assistant to director (fertilisers) in the ministry of petroleum. The charge against Mr Arora, as mentioned in the FIR, was that "The note which was typed by Shri K.L. Arora... this draft also remained for some time in the custody of Shri K.L. Arora. It therefore goes to show that Shri K.L. Arora leaked to outside unauthorised agencies information/documents which had been entrusted to him in confidence and to which he had an access thereto." The CBI also charged Mr Arora of possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

A week later, the CBI rounded up two more government servants, Mr A.S. Ahluwalia, the superintendent of the fertiliser department in the ministry, and Mr Mahabir Soni, a commerce ministry officer, on similar charges. Also arrested on 15 March was Mr I.S. Pai, the Delhi branch manager of a firm, Harshadray, owned by Mama Kapadia. Mr Pai, who was arrested at six in the evening, was charged with having bribed the officers to extract official secrets from them. On 17 March, at 6.30 pm, Mama Kapadia's nephew, Mr Nanak Sheth, branch manager of ICB, the agents of Braun, was arrested. He is the son of a retired ICS officer, Mr G.L. Sheth who served as the defence production secretary in the mid-1970s. A week later, on 23 March, a retired IAS officer, Mr G. Ramanathan, who is an employee of Mama Kapadia's ICB, was arrested.

Warrants were issued against Mama Kapadia; his house andoffice in Bombay were searched by the CBI on 23, 24 and 25 March; 44 files and four documents were seized. But the CBI

The World Bank's tentacles in India

They are spread far and wide. The economic ministries, the decision-making apex department of economic affairs in the finance ministry, the planning commission, the Reserve Bank of India are all filled to the brim with sympathisers and friends of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Some officers, at key levels, have been "loaned" to our government by the World Bank; they retain their lucrative continuity of service with the Washington-based bank while serving the government of India. They revert back to their cushy jobs in Washington, after having guarded the interests of the World Bank in their Indian jobs. Their salaries for this period are deposited in foreign banks because they are employees of the World Bank. In many cases, it means a tax-free salary.

The other group of World Bank men in the government are those IAS officers who land World Bank jobs after having served in an economic ministry in New Delhi and having come to the "notice" of the World Bank higher-ups in the course of their work. These officers maintain their lien with the Indian government during their stint with the bank, and come back to well-entrenched government positions—and probably continue to serve the bank's interests in New Delhi in the hope of landing a second Washington assignment. If the government were to make public the names of the officers who had come from the World Bank to the corridors of power in New Delhi, or the IAS officers who have served the bank in the past 20 years, many decisions of the government of India vis-a-vis the World Bank might begin to be fully understood.

One energetic economic advisor to the government, posted with the department of economic affairs, was a direct recruit of the World Bank. "Patriotic" feelings have brought him back to his motherland in his present key capacity. But he has maintained his lien with his employer—the World Bank. And the government seems to have turned a Nelson's eye to this. In another case, a very senior functionary of the planning commission too has maintained his lien with the World Bank. This officer, significantly, was loaned by the bank to the government of India at a crucial time—on the eve of the formulations of the sixth plan.

If a pro-World Bank officer is too senior to go to Washington on deputation, then there is still a way out: his kin go there. Many *bhais* and *bhatijas* of senior IAS officers have landed World Bank jobs through their influential kin.

The net result is obvious. The World Bank can know, if it wants, every noting in the government files and every rumour in the government corridors. Perhaps India is the only country which allows this kind of relationship. Moreover, those IAS officers who have spent two or three years in the bank or its affiliates, are keen to complete a full term of five years so that, they can get a tax-free, fat pension unavailable to others in government service. Indeed, the difference is between retiring rich and struggling to survive after retirement.

This is the background in which the World Bank's behaviour must be seen when it quietly informed the world that it had withdrawn the 250 million-dollar loan for Thal-Vaishet project. There was a conspiracy of silence among Indian officers posted there: not one of them informed the Indian government in advance of the bank's intentions, not even informally. The Indian officers just overlooked the damage being done to the country in the eyes of the world.

could not lay its hands on the master copy of the leaked documents. So far (till 15 April) the whereabouts of the master copy are unknown, though many photostat and xerox copies of the files are in circulation, both among politicians and journalists. Mama Kapadia engaged his friend Rajni Patel as his lawyer, and sought anticipatory bail. His plea was rejected by both the sessions court in Greater Bombay as well as by the Bombay High Court. Later, on 15 April, the Supreme Court too turned down the plea for anticipatory bail—and also ruled that the rejection of anticipatory bail should not prejudice Mr Kapadia from getting bail after arrest.

Narendra Narottamdas Kapadia(56) is no ordinary person. He is the director of several companies, including public sector firms: indeed, the list of companies on which he is a director reads like the stock exchange directory of Bombay. He is a member of the western regional committee of the government's Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI)—an organisation which sanctions government loans. He is the chairman of the ICB (that is why the CBI is after him these days). Mr Kapadia is the managing director of Protos Engineering and a partner of Harshadray. Besides, he is a director on the boards of Siemens India Ltd, Poysha Industrial Co., Madras Aluminium Company, Nilhat Shipping, Deepak Nitrite, Amar Dyechem, Industrial Processes (Maharashtra) Ltd, Hyderabad Carbons and Chemicals Ltd., Oceangas India Ltd, M. N. Dastur and Company, Trisure India, DSP Financial Consultants, (a Maharashtra government undertaking), Microprecision Pumps and Gears Ltd, and the TCI hotels and Resorts Ltd. Till recently, he was also the treasurer of Rajni Patel's Nehru Centre. He was the sheriff of Bombay in 1977-78.

Reliable sources told me in Bombay that in 1974, Mr Mama Kapadia raised loans worth Rs 90 lakhs for the Congress election campaign in UP. Till 1977, when Mrs Gandhi had gone out of power for a brief spell, Rs 11 lakhs of these loans had remained unpaid and Mr Kapadia had to personally organise the repayment. He is said to be an old financier of the Congress party, through his friend and mentor, Mr Rajni Patel. Today he is on the wrong side of the fence because Mr Rajni Patel has been spurned by Mrs Gandhi. Nor is Mama Kapadia new to the field of fertiliser contracts. Earlier, as the agent for an Italian firm, Tachnimont, he had been associated with the setting up of the fertiliser plants at Durgapur, Namrup, Cochin and Barauni.

While the present government was changing its mind about the contract, copies of the controversial, secret notes and internal government discussions were quietly being circulated by various people, ranging from businessmen to politicians, to select members of parliament and to some in an effort to create a fuss so that the contract might remain with Braun. The details of the case as revealed by the photostats of the files, did have the desired effect. But it was equally true that one multinational, Braun, had managed to reach the innermost reaches of government, and that its paid agents had a kind of access which makes one shudder. The power of C. F. Braun money was very much in evidence.

The story of Thal-Vaishet begins in 1976 when the Oil and Natural Gas Commission established the Bassein gas fields close to the Bombay High oil (in the Arabian Sea). They were capable of yielding 21.5 cubic metres of natural gas a day, enough to set up ten fertiliser plants, each with a capacity of 1,350 metric tonnes of ammonia a day. The 1.350 MTPD plant is considered to be the most efficient-sized plant, costwise, though plants upto 1,500 MTPD capacity have been established in the world. (India has, at present the know-how for plants upto 900 MTPD capacity.) In 1976, when Mrs Gandhi was the PM and Mr P. C. Sethi was the fertilisers and chemicals minister, a working group was set up under the chairman of the (then undivided) Fertilisers Corporation of India. This group decided to set up two ammonia plants each at Thal-Vaishet and Hazira, with corresponding urea plants.

In October 1977, a working group was set up under the chairmanship of a planning commission official, Mr Lavraj Kumar (who later became the chairman of the bureau of industrial costs and prices, and incidentally, is the present petroleum secretary). This committee, on the basis of the guidelines set by the Sharma panel, invited tenders from the following international companies for providing consultancy for the four ammonia plants: Toyo Engineering (Japan), Pullman Kellogg (UK), Humphreys and Glasgow (UK), Haldor Topsoe (Denmark), C. F. Braun (USA) and Technimont (Italy). The most important guideline before the selection committee was that the technology to be imported and utilised for all these four plants should be of proven nature, and that there should be standardisation in the technology, because the technology to be selected here was to ultimately be used for the additional six plants being planned. Another important condition was that the foreign party should be willing to associate the Fertilisers Planning and Development India Ltd, a government firm, as the subcontractor, and transfer the technology to FPDIL. In other words, the FPDIL would learn the technology and implement it in the six plants which would come up later. As the financing and foreign exchange requirements were to be met by World Bank credits, it was decided with the World Bank (in an agreement) that the consultant chosen would be to the bank's satisfaction.

Another working group was set up, also under the chairmanship of Mr Lavraj Kumar, to decide the criteria for selecting the consultants. This group recommended that while evaluating the bids, what should count is not merely the fee quoted (Thal is not to go by the principle of "cheapest is the best"), but several other criteria which would effect the economies of the project over its period of construction, commissioning and commercial operations.

While evaluating the bids, the difference in the completion time guaranteed by the bidders was to be considered, and also the on-stream efficiencies. The experience of the bidder in Indian conditions was also to be kept in mind. Moreover, the estimated benefit of the transfer of technology to the FPDIL had to be taken into account. Marks were allotted to

Rajni Patel has a word with his client, Narendra Kapadia

each of these heads and the evaluation as done on the basis of the total aggregate marks obtained by the competitors.

In August 1978 the bids of the six competitors were received by the government and referred to a negotiating committee headed by a noted fertiliser expert, Mr Paul Pothen, the managing director of Indian Farmers' Fertilisers Cooperative Corporation (IFFCO). IFFCO is in charge of the Hazira project, and the Thal-Vaishet is under the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers Ltd. (RCF) whose chairman, Mr Duleep Singh, was included in the negotiating committee. The other members were Mr B. B. Singh, chairman of National Fertilisers Ltd., and Mr H. H. Jethanandani, the executive director of FPDIL. This panel visited the facilities of all the competitors abroad and after an evaluation shortlisted three firms, C. F. Braun, Toyo and Pullman Kellogg, in that order, in March 1979. As the basic aim was to have standardisation of technology, the Paul Pothen panel recommended that all the four plants should be given to C. F. Braun.

The Pothen panel's recommendations were okayed by the union government's secretaries committee in June 1979. Then started the games of politicians. On 7 July, two days before the government of Morarji Desai fell due to Janata infighting, Mr Narsingh Yadav, the then minister of state in the petroleum ministry, sent up a note to his senior minister, Mr H. N. Bahuguna, saying that "All said in the favour of the Messrs C. F. Braun. It will be prudent if we don't put all the eggs in one basket. Braun is absolutely new to Indian conditions." He suggested that while two plants could be given to Braun, two should be given to Toyo, who were second in the list.

Two days later the government fell. The new minister, Mr T. A. Pai, reversed Mr Narsingh Yadav's noting. And so did Mr Bala Pazhanoor, the minister who succeeded Mr Pai in the Charan Singh government. In August 1979, the union government cleared the case for collaboration with Braun. Mr Bahuguna was now the finance minister, and he gave his okay after the file had been duly examined by secretary (expenditure) in the finance ministry. A new committee, under the chairmanship of Mr Duleep Singh, chairman of RCF, negotiated the terms of the contract with Braun and arrived at draft contracts which were initialled by the RCF in December 1979 and by the IIFCO in January/February 1980.

But when Mr P. C. Sethi returned to the department of petroleum, chemicals and fertilisers, he wanted a thorough revaluation of the case. He cited the 7 July 1979 noting of Mr Narsingh Yadav as an example of the malafides suspected by him, and asked an expert committee to take another look at the bids. Who were the experts chosen by Mr Sethi? With the exception of Mr Jethanandani of FPDIL, all the members of the Paul Pothen committee were kept in the new panel, headed by the chairman of National Fertilisers, Mr B. B. Singh (a member of the Pothen panel). Mr Paul Pothen and the RCF chairman Mr Duleep Singh were also in the new panel. In addition, Mr K. C. Sharma, chairman of the FPDIL, Mr D. C Gami, chairman of the Gujarat State Fertilisers Corporation, and two top executives of the private firm, Indian Explosives Ltd.—chairman K. V. Raghavan and managing director J. S. Baijal—were inducted into the panel, which was set up on 15 February 1980

Hardly had the panel started its deliberations, when Mr Sethi sent a note to the committee specifically asking it to consider the case of Pullman Kellogg, the firm which was third in the shortlist. This unusual gesture was obviously noticed: the then secretary of the department, Mr K. R Ramanathan, made a detailed note to the minister on 23 February. Mrs Gandhi shifted Mr Sethi out from this ministry on 6 March. Before leaving the ministry, Mr Sethi hurriedly put a note against the secretary's note, saying, "I am unable to understand why a deliberate attempt is being made to bypass Pullman Kellogg"

The secretary Mr Ramanathan's role, too, is funny While it was understandable when he was trying to uphold an expert panel's findings, and in the process crossing swords with the minister, why did he rush with the case file to the new minister. Mr Veerendra Patil, on the very day he took over on 7 March? Why was Mr Ramanathan so interested in the case? Mr Veerendra Patil noted in the file that it would be prudent to wait for the Singh committee's report.

The file was then sent by Mr Veerendra Patil to the finance minister, Mr R Venkataraman Mr Venkataraman wrote on the file on 15 April, "PM has seen the file. It is be the relative merits of all the six p are assessed by the expert com as early as possible." So all th firms were told to bid again by B. Singh panel, and the entire cise started all over again. This tunity was utilised by the comp of Braun to modify their bid. Singh panel, however, sugge the two plants at Thal-Vaish awarded to Braun. In the Hazira, the three original pan bers maintained that it should Braun, but the four new me pointed that putting "all the one basket" was dangerous and mended that Pullman Kellogg the two plants at Hazira. St the secnd shortlisted firm, To not considered at all.

In late July last year the slated to come up before the committee on economic affair did not go to this apex body, in on 29 July a sub-committee cabinet, comprising four min was created. Two were member economic affairs committee—th minister Mr Venkataraman an then petroleum minister, Mr Ve dra Patil. Mr P. C. Sethi, who then the works and housing minister Mr Shiv Shanker, the law min were the other two in the sub-com tee. But apparently even this h powered committee was div sharply There was a deadlock ministers wanted Braun to be pletely bypassed and the Thal con given to Haldor Topsoe The information and broadcasting ter, Mr Vasant Sathe, was nom to be the fifth member of the committee on Thal and Hazira an voted in favour of keeping out and bringing in Haldor Topso associate of the Italian firm Progetti Snam had, in the me bagged all the seven contracts urea process fertiliser plan are to be set up along with Hazira and operated with the High gas.

Mr Vasant Sathe was not new to the Thal case. As an oppo MP during Janata rule, he had a letter to the then petroleum ter, Mr Bahuguna, recommendin case of one of the six comp Humphrey Glasgow. Mr Bahugu sent the letter of Sathe to the committee for consideration et, Humphrey Glasgow was suitable

While the decision to byp may be a controversial fact that the secret files of the ment were leaked out is und The CBI are at present about the case; and it seem mined to find out how the took place, which ultimately le exposure in the Lok Sabha December last

It is not unusual keep a tab on the pro

Fourth in the world

In terms of production and consumption of chemical fertilisers, India ranks fourth in the world—after the USA, the USSR and China. But there is tremendous potential for growth. While we are the fourth-largest consumer, our average consumption per hactare is one of the poorest: just 30 kgs as compared to 400 kgs in Japan, Holland and Belgium. Even Egypt consumes 150 kgs per hactare. At present we are heavily dependent on imports both of fertilisers and of raw materials for the production of fertilisers. Around Rs 1,000 crores is spent on these imports by the country every year

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file when they are bidding for a private contract. In fact the goings-on in the corridors of power are better known to the agents of the private firms than perhaps even the top bureaucrats of the ministries—because the agents operate both at the lower and the higher levels. While they use their charms with the senior officers to get the case cleared, they also remember to keep the clerical staff and especially the personal assistants of the officers, in good humour. And it is through them that the real information is leaked out. When a report is being typed out, or cyclostyled, an extra copy can easily be kept by the junior functionaries in the ministeries and passed on to interested parties. There are some racketeers in Delhi who specialise in this kind of dirt. They do not work for any particular firm, but their services are available on hire to anyone who wants them. Often these people voluntarily go to the parties whose bids are pending and offer them inside information and extra copies of the notings on the files. Recently the government banned a number of such known agents from entering any government office.

Espionage of this kind is not restricted to firms bidding for tenders only. SUNDAY had reported in its issue of 14 September 1980 how the visit of a secret Indian military mission to Israel in January 1963 was leaked out later that year on the eve of Mr Chou en Lai's visit to Egypt, much to Mr Jawaharlal Nehru's embarrassment. A high-powered enquiry was ordered into this embarrassing leakage and it was found that the man who was in charge of the cyclostyling machine in the defence accounts department used to, as a matter of routine, pass on an extra copy to a foreign mission in Delhi, and he had passed on a copy of the tour schedule of the military team to the foreign agents. ■

Who was the Kathmandu man?

While the CBI are tightlipped about the investigations made by them in the "Petroleum Ministry Leakage Case" (that is how the Thal leakage is being described in CBI circles), an affidavit filed by the investigating superintendent of police of the SIU(I) branch of the CBI, New Delhi before the Bombay High Court (to secure the arrest of Mr N. N. (Mama) Kapadia made some interesting revelations.

S. P. Sardari Lal stated in his affidavit (criminal application no 475 of 1981) that during investigation one of the arrested persons had told the CBI that after the cabinet sub-committee was formed (on 29 July, 1980), Mr N. N. Kapadia along with other "conspirators" went to Kathmandu to seek help from "an influential person" who was at that time camping there. "After 15 minutes they were told that they were late, but asked to give note on the subject which they gave at Delhi."

Who was this influential person? According to the grapevine in Delhi, one VVIP from India who was at that time camping in Kathmandu was a Swami who is close to the PM's house. Could it be possible that Mama Kapadia had sought his help in getting his case cleared? Arguing for Mr Kapadia before the Supreme Court on 15 April (the plea was for anticipatory bail), Mr Rajni Patel referred to the CBI's contention about Mama Kapadia's meeting with an "influential person" in Kathmandu and asked the CBI counsel why the CBI was not disclosing his name—or interrogating this "influential person."

Another interesting revelation made by S. P. Sardari Lal's affidavit was the amounts allegedly paid by Mama Kapadia's nephew, Nanak Sheth, to procure the leaked secret documents. According to the CBI, the deal for these payments was struck in April 1979 when Nanak Sheth allegedly ganged up with a government servant and told him to keep on passing on papers relating to C. F. Braun's interests to him. Sardari Lal stated that the following payments were made against each document which was leaked:

1. The evaluation committee report—Rs 2,000.
2. Agenda of the secretaries committee—Rs 1,000,
3. Cabinet agenda note—Rs 1,000.
4. Notification on re-examination—Rs 100.
5. Notification of extension—Rs 100.
6. Original files regarding the contract—Rs 8,000 in two instalments.
7. B. B. Singh committee's recommendations—Rs 500.
8. Agriculture ministry's note for cabinet meeting—Rs 500.

Mr Sardari Lal further stated that, according to the statement of one of the accused, 30 or 40 copies of the above documents were made by the Industrial Consultancy Bureau, of which Mama Kapadia is the chairman and Nanak Sheth the branch manager in Delhi, and distributed among members of parliament.

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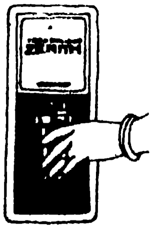

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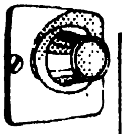

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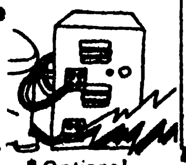

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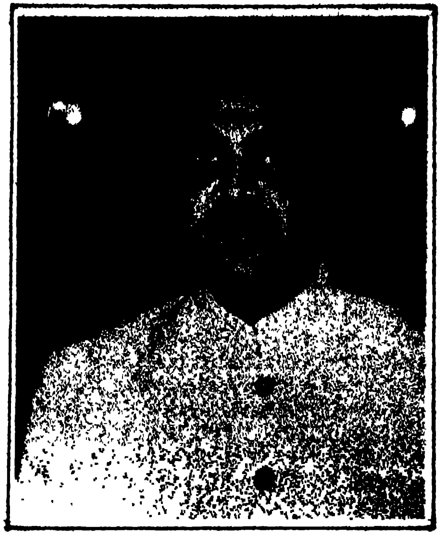


K. P. Unnikrishnan

Is a member of parliament within his rights to quote from secret government files to prove his point that the government has committed a mistake while arriving at a decision? Detailed guidelines in this matter were laid down by the then Lok Sabha speaker in a ruling given on 26 February 1965. In that ruling, the speaker upheld the right of the members to quote from secret government files, no matter how they had laid their hands on them. But the speaker also made a stringent condition: MPs were not allowed to spring a surprise by suddenly quoting from secret documents. MPs are expected to give prior notice to the speaker and to the government before quoting from secret files, and they have to give a personal undertaking to the effect that the files being exposed are genuine. It is, moreover, not binding on the government either to admit the authenticity of the file, or to lay the original file on the table of the house after an exposure by a member. The safeguard against unnecessary sensationalism also exists: in case a member makes a mistake, then the government can always initiate privilege proceedings against the member for having misled the House.

The first instance of an expose from official files, as recorded in the speaker's ruling of 1965, was in February 1958. The credit for that goes to none other than the late Feroze Gandhi. In the course of a speech in the Lok Sabha, Feroze Gandhi, who was an independent member, referred to certain notes of the finance minister to the principal finance secretary: he also quoted from these secret files in the course of his speech. When the treasury benches objected, and wanted to know how he had got the documents, Feroze Gandhi replied: "If I were to reveal all the sources of my information this enquiry would never have been held; I cannot." The speaker had ruled then that it was not necessary for Feroze Gandhi to divulge his source of information. "It has been repeatedly held in courts of law that even if a document is obtained by stealth, so long as it is genuine it is admissable in evidence," the speaker said.

In another instance, CPI member Homi Daji and S. M. Banerji (Independent) laid on the table of the House in the budget session in 1963 an auditor's report on the working of two insurance companies which the government had earlier said should not be made public in the national interest. They also exposed the report of the then attorney general Mr Shastri, on the Vivian Bose commission's report, which the government did not want to make public.

More recently, K. P. Unnikrishnan quoted from a top secret letter concerning RAW in a debate in the Lok Sabha on 15 May 1978. In that letter (No. T325/FS/76, dated 15.3.76), the then foreign secretary, Kewal Singh, had directed the governor of the Reserve Bank to transfer $ 5.5 million to the Union Bank of Switzerland at Geneva for secret use by the government. Unnikrishnan had proved, by quoting a subsequent letter written by the then number two man in RAW, Mr Shankaran Nair (DO No. 10/SOP/76, dated 11.5.76, addressed to the deputy chief accountant of the Reserve Bank of India) that this money had been collected by Mr Nair at Geneva and passed on to the Hinduja brothers of Iran. In 1972, Unnikrishnan had quoted from secret files of the Indian Oil Corporation and exposed a managing director who had submitted fraudulent medical bills worth Rs 1.5 lakhs. The officer was later removed.

Mrs Margaret Alva quoted from secret defence ministry files in the Rajya Sabha last year, and her expose led to the stoppage of the sale of Centurion tanks.

On 21 December 1960, the speaker of the Lok Sabha had asked the opinion of Jawaharlal Nehru on the subject of members laying on the table secret files of the government. Nehru's reply was: "So far as I am concerned, I think that this business of considering documents confidential and secret by our ministers or departments is carried to an unnecessary extreme. I think it is a habit coming back from the old days, of marking all kinds of papers 'confidential' and 'secret'. Sometimes they are not so, sometimes they are, of course. That is true. I should like as many papers as possible to be placed on the table of the House or to be made available to the members."

Freedom of speech in Parliament, with its accompanying privileges, as enshrined in Article 105 of the Constitution, is the essence of Parliamentary democracy. If the camouflage of official secrets is allowed to shroud dirty deals in the corridors of power, then Parliament, which is the watchdog over the spendings from the consolidated fund of India, cannot function. While the present government has taken a stringent view of the 23 December 1980 expose in the Lok Sabha, it may be interesting to hark back to the days of Jawaharlal Nehru and see what he had to say about a situation like the one created by the Thal leakage.

THE MURDEROUS BOMBS OF ASSAM

Subir Roy reports from Gauhati

On 6 April, Mr E. S. Parthasarathy, the divisional commissioner for upper Assam was in his Jorhat office as usual by ten in the morning. He had reason to feel a little relaxed. Gone were the days of tension that had plagued the administration in upper Assam since the agitation had laid siege on the pipeline headquarters of Oil India Ltd at Duliajan in Dibrugarh district and stopped the outflow of crude from the Assam oilfields. The most harrowing day had been 18 January 1980 when Dr Robi Moitra of Oil India Ltd and three picketers were killed. But things were much better now. The agitation was muted, if not over. There was a popular government of sorts after a long period of President's rule. Also, the new menace, the bomb explosions in various parts of the state, had abated a little in the last few days. Mr Parthasarathy could take some personal credit for the new situation. Summoned back from Pondicherry to help set right the Assam administration, he had gone about his work with characteristic firmness and efficiency. This had paid dividends administratively, but had marked him out as one of the main "enemies" of the agitation.

Mr Parthasarathy had to pay the ultimate price. No sooner had he relaxed in his chair on 6 April than a massive explosion rent the air. And it was all over for Mr Parthasarathy. His bloodsplattered body was only half intact, the room was in a shambles. This was the most lethal blow, ever since the first bombs started going off in Assam in early 1980. As the state and the nation gasped in shock, a crucial message went home with deadly insistence. The terrorist killings that had marked the conflicts in the other states of the north eastern region—Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur—had now established themselves in Assam too.

The grenade that killed Mr Parthasarathy came close on the heels of a severe explosion the previous day (5 April) that wrecked the petroleum products pipeline from Gauhati to Siliguri near Barpeta. On 6 April itself a bomb had gone off in one of the buildings at the Oil India township of Narangi near Gauhati. An earlier major attack on a pipeline had occurred on 13 February at Puranigudam in Nowgong district; two feet of the main 1150 km Duliajan-Barauni pipeline was blown off. There had been an even earlier attempt to blow off the pipeline but the bomb had been discovered before it could explode.

The 19-31 April budget session of the Assam Legislative Assembly, which was marked by tumultous scenes and developments within the house, also became historic for the bomb blasts that both heralded and terminated it. On the night before the session began, two explosions rocked the Assembly hostel area right in the heart of the supposedly secure administrative township of Dispur. But this was nothing compared to the series of blasts along railway tracks on the night of 31 March-1 April. Altogether seven explosions went off between 10 pm and 2 am in which the Assam mail was derailed and one railway employee killed. Those who wanted to register their displeasure at the Assembly session being held, and an elected government functioning, clearly had the means to lend a touch of death to their message.

Volunteer Force of AASU holding public drill in Gauhati in May 1980

In June 1980, PREPAK leader Maipak Sarma held a meeting at which plans were hatched to take terrorism to Assam. Blueprints were drawn up to assassinate leading politicians like Sarat Sinha and Mrs Taimur. A decision was taken to raid the Reserve Bank of India office at Gauhati. Among the documents seized was a detailed and accurate plan of the Gauhati RBI.

Another symbolic target of the terrorists has been All India Radio installations. In the early days of the agitation, AIR seemed to have passed completely into the hands of the agitation. Since President's rule, the process has been slowly reversed and hence the anger of the agitators towards the AIR of today. On 11 February, the transmission towers of the two main radio stations in the state, Gauhati and Dibrugarh, were damaged by two blasts. Transmission from Dibrugarh, station was affected for some time.

The first major attack on an important individual occurred in Assam on 19 April 1980 when a grenade was lobbed on the car of the leading Congress(I) politician, Mr Hiteswar Saikia (currently education minister in the Anowara Taimur ministry) at Nazira village in Shibsagar district. Luckily, neither Mr Saikia nor any of those travelling with him were hurt. But one of the assailants was killed in the explosion. He was later identified as belonging to the Jatiatabadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad, but as a dead man tells no tales, the lead took the police nowhere.

During that period last year, when the All Assam Minority Students Union came into being and the minorities began regrouping themselves under the protection of President's rule, there were several incidents involving explosives, mainly in areas where the minorities were numerically strong, like Tinsukia, Dhubri, Rangia and Margherita. In Rangia, two Bengalis were arrested in two separate incidents and a man was killed in an explosion while making bombs. There was also an incident of bombs being hurled at an AASU picket. But minority activity of this type died down towards the latter half of 1980.

Police officials now going through the records of the past 15 months of terrorist activity find a pattern First came the letter bombs and crackers. Then came the attack on public property: the railways, the pipelines and AIR. It is only recently that the pro-agitation terrorists have started regularly attacking selected people. On 6 December 1980 the Congress(I) ministry was formed, and it represented the defeat of the agitation in its attempts to prevent a popular government from coming to power until fresh elections could be held on the basis of new voters lists from which 'foreigners' names were deleted. And the extremists were anxious to make life difficult for the new government. In the first eleven months of 1980 there were 52 incidents which were registered under the Explosive Substances Act. But this figure shot up to 72 in the period between 1 December and 7 April. The worst month seems to be the current one of April; in the first seven days there have already been ten incidents.

Through these 15 months, as the target of attack has slowly shifted, so has the nature of the devices used. First came the letter bombs and crackers that were thrown at people or objects. These attacks were mainly limited to areas in Goalpara, Dibrugarh and Darrang districts which were previously CPI(M) strongholds. Then came the period of small devices with greater combustible potential: gelatine pieces or gunpowder wrapped in *sutli* (twine). Attacks with these have been limited to Nowgong and Kamrup districts. In a third category come the sophisticated bombs with timing devices. These are set off with electric charges, and have been used mostly in Darrang and Kamrup districts. In the final category come grenades stolen from military and para-military sources, or the underground forces of other states in the region. These have been mostly used in upper Assam. The device that killed Parthasarathy was a grenade whose pin and timer had been taken off and the electric charges so placed that when pressure was applied the circuit would be completed and the device go off.

So far this year seven people have been killed and 23 injured by terrorists. Against an enemy as lethal as this the government has been peculiarly inactive. Till 10 April it had arrested only 55 people in connection with the 72 cases registered for the December-early April period. And these 55 relate to only 14 of the 72 cases: for the remaining 58 cases no arrests have been made yet. Even the figure of 55 on 14 cases does not give the full picture. As many as 12 have been arrested over one explosion in Gauhati and four over the explosion in Jorhat. Not a single chargesheet has been filed in Assam so far in any terrorism case.

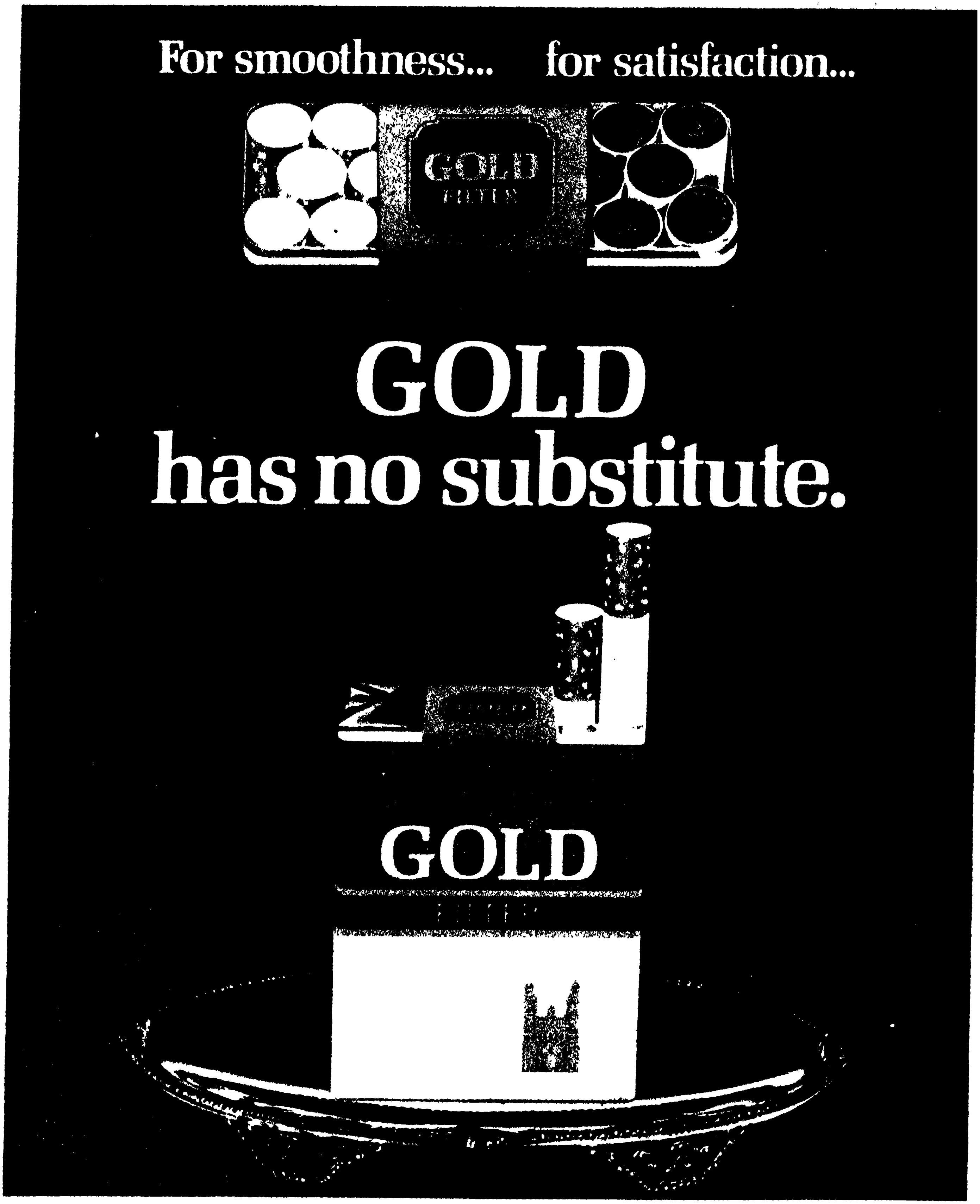
Why? The startling truth is that Assam even now hardly has any functioning intelligence apparatus worth the name. The rot, as in the whole administration, started during the days of the Jogen Hazarika ministry that replaced the Janata ministry of Mr Golap Barbora. During that period, in late 1979, the agitation held total sway over the state—and the police became ineffective, either in the routine matter of providing protection to the minorities or the more sensitive task of gathering intelligence. The police began to discharge its routine duties better after Mr H. C. Sarin took over in late April 1980, and more so since Mrs Taimur came to power in December, but police intelligence did not improve.

One example will suffice. As early as in September 1980 the governor had ordered that a special operations unit be set up immediately under an SP to combat terrorism but this did not start functioning till February. For all this a certain amount of blame is now being placed on Mr Sarin. The current assessment is that he was too new to Assam to be able to plunge straight into the fray. He was also deeply apprehensive of demoralising the police force by taking strong action against senior police officers. So he largely let the the police force function the best it could on its own. For example, it was the Taimur government that finally arrested and proposed the dismissal of Mr Hiranya Bhattacharya, the former DIG Border. During President's rule he went on medical leave after being transferred to Delhi, set himself up at the Gauhati Medical College Hospital and merrily continued his role of advising the movement from his 'sick' bed.

One of the important decisions the government took last month to tone up the intelligence apparatus was to transfer out the special IGP(SB), Mr Mihir Baruah, and Mr Samar Das was brought in. Mr Baruah has now been appointed chief security officer of the Indo Burma Petroleum Company in Calcutta. Another new arrival on the Assam scene is an old hand, Mr K. P. S. Gill, who has been additional IGP since March. He was transferred to Meghalaya towards end 1979, during the height of the agitation when a youth, Khargeshwar Talukdar, was drowned after a police *lathi* charge. Incensed public opinion at that time held Mr Gill personally responsible for the death.

Some concrete clues are available about the extent and power of the terrorists. The grenade that killed Mr Parthasarathy, the explosion that ripped the Gauhati-Siliguri pipeline, and other recent blasts all point to the highly sophisticated expertise available to the terrorists. A key arrest made so far is that of Mr Biraja Nanda Choudhury, a former "sub-area organiser" of the Special Security Bureau. The SSB was set up after the India-China war of 1962 by the then director of the Intelligence Bureau, Mr B. N. Mullick. His idea was to help the border people of the north east develop a sense of national identity, to teach them self-defence and train them in counter-insurgency. The SSB has been periodically holding camps all over the north east, training the local people in self-defence. It has also given selected individuals training in explosives and guerilla activities. Mr Choudhury has been arrested along

Continued on page 26



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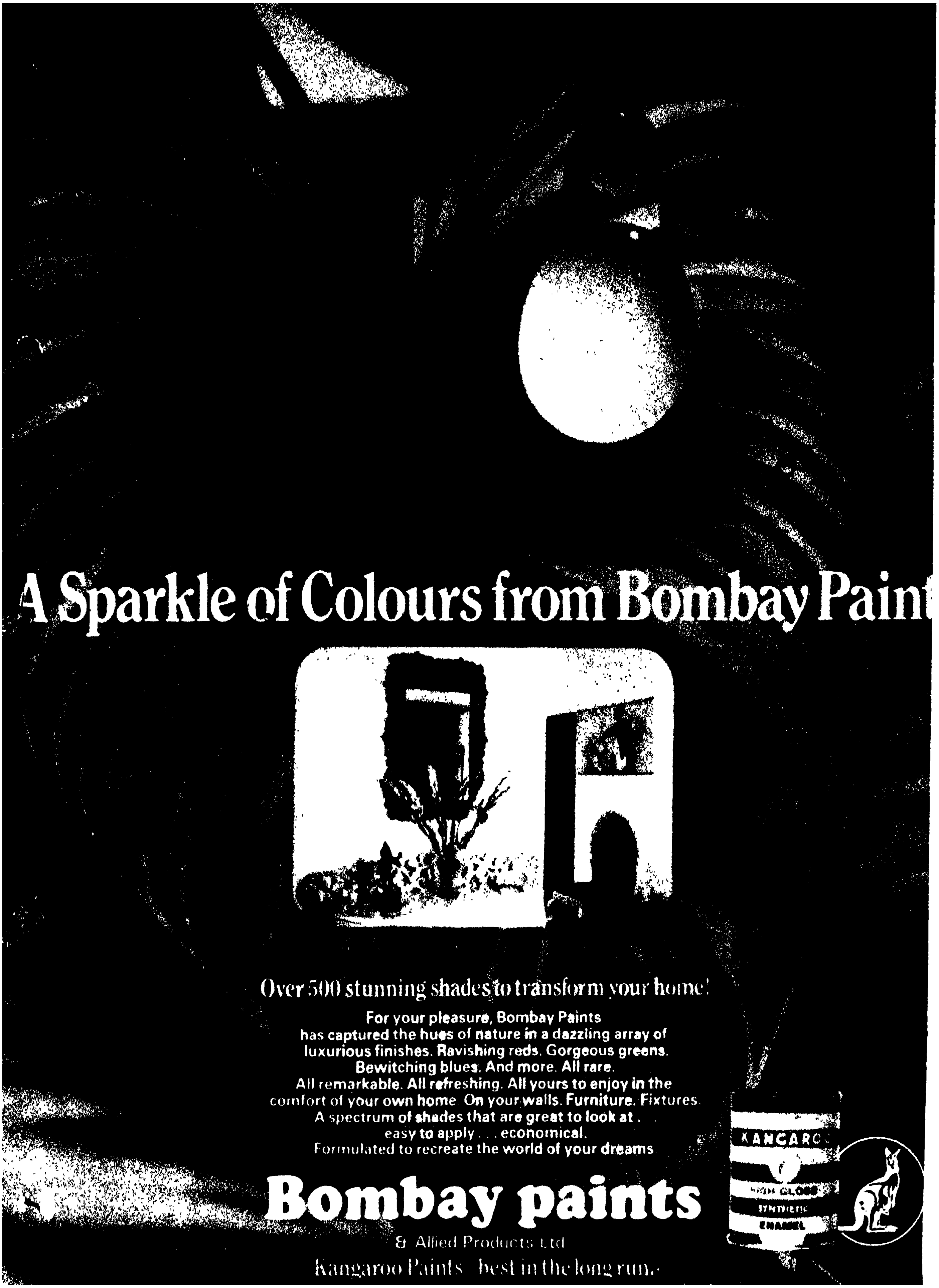

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with his daughter in Gauhati and the two of them are now being interrogated by the police.

Another clue as to who might be helping the terrorists comes from a case that the police seem to have cracked. In August 1980 some young men rode up to a Marwari's *gaddi* in the business area of Gauhati, Fancy Bazaar, and attempted to loot his cash. They failed, but shot two people dead. The young men were later tracked down to Shillong and arrested. From their interrogation the suspicion grew that the People's Liberation Army of Kanglaipak (PREPAK), one of the two main insurgency groups in Manipur, was involved through one of its main leaders, Maipak Sarma. When Sarma himself was later arrested in Shillong further details came to light, particularly after a camp of his group at Dawki on Meghalaya's border with Bangladesh was raided and many documents seized. It seems that in June 1980, Maipak Sarma held a meeting at which plans were hatched to take terrorism to Assam. Blueprints were drawn up to assassinate leading politicians like ex-chief minister Sarat Sinha and Mrs Anowara Taimur. A decision was also taken to raid the Reserve Bank of India office at Gauhati.Among the documents seized was a detailed and accurate plan of the Gauhati RBI.

Maipak Sarma made contacts in Assam with people in the movement (including one teacher, one businessman and one chartered accountant). He came to Gauhati in May, collected volunteers and held two training camps at Basistha and Burnihat. At these camps a hard core group of about 30 young people received guerilla training. From these beginnings was formed the United Peoples Liberation Army of Seven States. Their aim was to make the whole of the north east secede from India. They even contacted the rebel Naga leader Muivah, now in Burma, but apparently no agreement was reached. Proof of links between the Assam terorists and PREPAK makes a longstanding fear frighteningly real: the whole of the north east going up in flames as a result of cooperation between the various terrorist groups.

On 11 January this year a time device went off in a shop in Kalaigaon in Darrang district, killing shopkeeper Ramani Mohan Debnath and another person. Debnath was a leader of the local Bengali community and in the bad books of the agitation. The police have arrested Hiren Saharia, Mahendra Kalita and a few others in this connection; they were all at one time trained by the SSB and were members of the Volunteer Forces of the AASU. The first trace of the Volunteer Force's involvement in terrorism came in March 1980 when, in Bijni in Goalpara district, someone gave two cowherds a packet to carry. When they tried to open the packet it went off. In the subsequent search more explosives were discovered and the local OC was even injured when some of it went off. The Volunteer Force's involvment was suspected in this. This force of the AASU was formed in early 1980 and attracted a lot of attention by the drills it held in public places. These public drills were later banned but the Volunteer Force is known to have held more elaborate training camps in Mangaldai in Darrang district. (The Assam movement began with the largescale deletion of the names of 'foreigners' from voters lists for a byelection to the Mangaldai parliamentary seat in mid-1979.)

In August 1980 there were attempts to prevent children from attending the schools that were reopening after a long break. In Margherita grenades were lobbed at Bengali mothers taking their children to a local school. The hand of the Jatiya Rakshi Bahini (National Guard) was seen in this incident. Its *sarbadhinayak*, Binod Chetia, was arrested. The *bahini* is the volunteer wing of the Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad (JYCP), a constituent of the GSP.

The important thing about all these groups is that they are still quite new and nebulous. In the murky grey twilight of an underground movement slowly taking root, labels, nomenclature and written constitutions matter little. What matters is the hate in some hearts, and the weapons of death in the hands of some others. And surely the most ineffective way of fighting this is by the ludicrous checks and secuity arrangements that are now being introduced in the capital area of Dispur. A pedestrian is questioned before being let in. (An impressive occupant in an impressive looking car gets by much more easily.) The government officer going back home also has to establish his bonafides. The answer to the terrorism surely is the ability to play the essentially political game of counter-insurgency. But for that you need a firm and stable government. And some ministers in the Taimur government have not decorated their living quarters properly yet for they do not know how long they will remain there.

Meanwhile, senior government officials take lectures from army officers on explosives, and make jokes about not being responsible for the possible bomb in the boot when you ask for a lift. Formerly, after periodic bloodletting Assam always returned to its easygoing, charming self. Now the air is filled with talk of a bloody insurgency. By the time Assam comes out of it you may not recognise it if you had known it before.

The "Jackal" goes to Assam

By Santanu Ghosh

Maipak Sarma, the urban guerilla terror of Manipur, led a special branch team of the Assam Police on 17 February to his hideout at Dawki, a bustling Meghalaya village bordering Sylhet district of Bangladesh. It was a chilly day and rain was keeping up a steady patter. The hideout—a thatched one-room house owned by Maipak's Khasi mistress Teresa Lamia—was located in the middle of a bazaar. During the search the sleuths stumbled on a sheaf of papers. There were ripples of excitement among the policemen as they began to read the papers, written in neat handwriting but in bad English. Contained in two separate bunches of foolscap paper were daring plots to commit a daylight robbery in the Gauhati branch of the Reserve Bank of India and to assassinate nine dignitaries including Assam chief minister Anowara Taimur, her two ministerial colleagues, education minister Hiteswar Saikia and irrigation minister Afzalur Rahaman and the state's special IGP (special branch) Samar Das.

The twin plots of bank robbery and assassinations were intended as a curtain-raiser to a wave of terrorism in troubled Assam, planned for early this year by an underground extremist body which forged a clandestine link with the rebel People's Revolutionary Party of Kanglaipak (PREPAK) of Manipur. The man who made this task possible is Maipak Sarma, a 32-year-old daredevil who set ablaze Imphal valley with urban guerilla terrorism in 1979. The activities of Maipak, code name "Jackal," gathered by the intelligence operatives by interrogating him at Gauhati, Shillong, Dimapur and Imphal for the past three months, project him as an intriguing man of many roles. Said an intelligence operative about Maipak, "He is a ruthless guy with a known record of 22 killings, a double agent and the man behind the Manipur insurgents' connection

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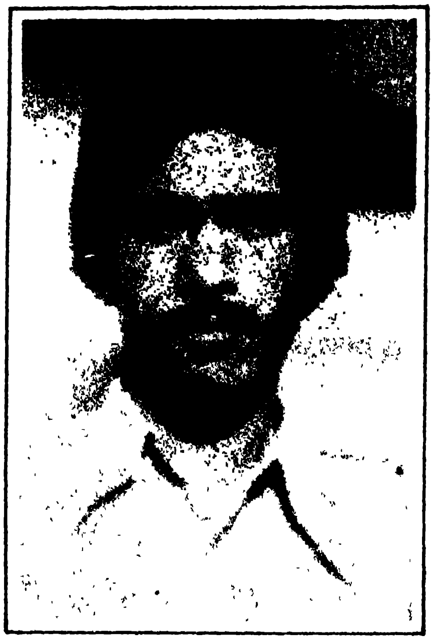
> The 32-year-old daredevil who set ablaze Imphal valley in 1979 is an intriguing man of many roles. Intelligence sources describe him as "a ruthless guy with a known record of 22 killings, a double agent and the man behind the Manipur insurgents' connection with the Assam extremists."

with the Assam extremists." The chance arrest of Maipak at Shillong by CRPF on 8 February however aborted the plots and also the schemes to set off the planned terrorism. "Jackal called it a day," shrilled a CRPF officer while communicating over telephone Maipak's nabbing to police headquarters at Gauhati.

Maipak slipped into Gauhati in mid-May last year and checked in at a hotel at Panbazar. Through his known contacts who stayed at a Manipuri locality in City's Ulubari area, Maipak sent word to the hawks in AASU and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad. Some desultory contacts were established with some persons who were loosely linked with AASU or AAGSP. Maipak, in his confessional statement to the police, a businessman, a teacher and a chartered accountant. With Maipak came three other PREPAK members. By mid-June the contacts began to take a tangible shape. Fuelled perhaps by adventurism, a hallmark for all kinds of terrorism, the extremists in Assam and Maipak's compatriots decided to float an underground organisation. At a meeting in a room in a city hotel on 20 June, such an organisation was set up. It was christened the United People's Liberation Army of Seven States (UPLASS). The aim was avowedly secessionist with stress on the urgency of a hook-up between the region's tribal or subnationalist dissidents. Maipak said his Assamese collaborators asked for arms training. A decision was taken to collect arms as Maipak's men had only a .12 pistol, a 9 mm pistol, a stengun and a .35 bore revolver with them.

The training started with the opening of a camp at Silphukhuri, a crowded downtown Gauhati locality, to the complete ignorance of the police. Between July 1980 and February 1981, three more training camps were opened in the city's Beltola and Bashistha suburbs and at Burnihat on the Gauhati-Meghalaya border. While the camp at Beltola was lodged in the house of a PHE SDO, taken at a monthly rent of Rs 450, the one in Burnihat was camouflaged behind the forest college. To help in the training, Maipak brought more of his men from Imphal and in July the number of such people was around 30. Though Maipak denied receiving money from the Assam extremists for the training he imparted them, a police source said he was given Rs 5,000 a month.

Maipak and his Assamese cohorts kept the police at bay by a meticulous intelligence system and constant



Maipak Sarma

switching of hideouts. Police however sniffed the racket and were hot on the trail of Maipak. The first information report (FIR), in this connection, was filed by a SB inspector S. P. Sarmah at Gauhati on 27 July last. The case number was 176(7)80. Police were certain about Maipak's foray into Gauhati when two factions of PREPAK clashed at a hotel in the city's Paltanbazar area. Two activists from the Tulachandra faction of PREPAK—Kirtibabu Singh and his jean-clad girl companion Langding—arrived in Gauhati in the middle of June to settle scores with Maipak and his deputy, Leishambi Singh. Maipak picked up from the grapevine the news regarding their arrival and fixed a rendezvous at Janata hotel for a possible rapprochement. It was 30 June. But the meeting took a stormy turn with Leishambi hurling accusations against Tulachandra. A scuffle began and Leishambi was roughed up. Two revolver shots rang out during the melee and a curious onlooker in the lobby—an autorickshaw driver—was hit.

The Janta hotel fracas made Maipak jittery and he went straight to Shillong in the first week of July. The police were also on their toes by then and acting on a tip-off raided the Beltola camp and retrieved a Survey of India map of Barpeta subdivision, nine detonators, three gelignite sticks and some safety fuse wires from there. A spate of arrests followed and they included both trusted Maipak aides and people from Assam. The hotel shootout incident confirmed the nagging suspicion that Maipak fled Manipur to escape the wrath of the Tulachandra faction which held both Maipak and Leishambi as renegades planted in PREPAK as police agents.

Maipak, a resident of the Singjamei area of Imphal town and a school dropout, was drafted in the PREPAK in its formative days. Leishambi alias Ibomvha Singh was a sepoy in the fifth Manipur Rifles.

In his confessional statement, Maipak gave a startling exposure of how he double-crossed his comrades-in-arms and maintained mysterious relations with the high-ups in the government. At Shillong he rented a two-room house in the Nongthymai area and was maintaining his link with the extremists in Gauhati through the son of an ex-IAF personnel. Maipak again became panicky when he picked up the news that his friend Leishambi had turned against him and was trying to kill him. Leishambi was telling his friends that during the Janata hotel incident Maipak did not help him as Tulachandra's men assaulted him. On hearing the news Maipak walked straight to the Shillong police station on 19 July and told OC Lahan that he was an informer of the Manipur IGP and wanted to talk to him.

According to Maipak's statement, SP Shillong, E. N. Ram Mohan, checked on Maipak's credentials and the rebel leader passed on information of Leishambi's whereabouts to Imphal. A hunt for Leishambi then started and he was killed in an encounter with security forces near Dimapur in Nagaland four days later. Maipak also stated that he was once handed over Rs 3,000 by a top police official of Manipur at a CRPF camp at Polo Bazar in Shillong and received Rs 4,000 on 3 September from the then chief minister of Manipur, R. K. Dorendra Singh, for his treatment when he called on the chief minister at Raj Niwas in Shillong. The Assam police could know more of Maipak's machinations when two of his aides were arrested on 15 August on specific charges. After the arrest of a gun runner on 21 January at Jalukbari near Gauhati, Maipak was further fear-stricken and shifted to Dawki. On 8 February he was arrested with two revolver bullets in his person from a hotel at Shillong. He was chargesheeted on 23 March under IPC section 121/124A.

Maipak impressed the Assam police with his leadership qualities and ingenuity in planning. The plot to commit robbery at the RBI was simply superb, confided a police officer. A layout of the six-storeyed RBI building was recovered at Dawki. An employee of the bank who helped Maipak hatch the plot was also nabbed. The plot to kill Samar Das, Special IGP, was very elaborate. The plan was to shoot him from a thick undergrowth near Lakshmi Niwas, a cottage near his official residence. ■

E. S. Parthasarathi

Brutal end to an illustrious career

Hema was not particularly excited when her husband Mr E. S. Parthasarathi, then the chief secretary in Pondicherry was shifted to the troubled state of Assam in June 1979 as the Commissioner for the Upper Assam division. But Mr Parathasarathi was. For, he was returning to the state where he had started his career as a civil servant in 1961 and which he had served in different capacities till his transfer to New Delhi in 1970. Despite her initial hesitation, Hema followed her husband to his headquarters in Jorehat. But she was never at ease. She could never get over the nagging fear that someday some great harm might come to her husband. This fear deepened after Mr Parthasarathi narrowly escaped death at Nowgong in March. The room he was occupying at the Circuit House was wrecked by a bomb blast only minutes after he had vacated it.

Since then, Hema had been requesting Mr Parthasarathi to be more careful. But Mr Parthasarathi was confident. He was very sure of himself and would invariably laugh at any suggestion of danger to his life. His reply was: "I have not harmed anybody and nobody will harm me." But this would not pacify Hema. She did not like her husband going to the bazaar unescorted and on foot. She would ask her servants to open the letters addressed to her husband so that "letter bombs" did not explode in his face. Perhaps, towards the end Mr Parthasarathi too was getting suspicious. Since the beginning of April his hate mail began swelling. That was possibly why he could be persuaded to have a tighter security for his residence.

Even then, Hema was not prepared for the disaster. On that fateful day—Monday 6 April—both she and her husband woke up quite early in the morning. They had planned to start reading out passages from the *Ramayana* together on that day so that the epic would be completed in instalments by 12 April, *Ramnavami* day. They finished reading the first instalment at around 8.30 am. Soon after lunch was served to Mr Parthasarathi. He always wanted his lunch that way—early in the morning. A little before 10 am, he left his residence for his office, 500 yards away.

E. S. Parthasarathi

Then at 10.10 am came the bang. People came running on to the street from the building in which the Commissioner's office was located as well as from the neighbouring houses. Some of the office staff who rushed to the Commissioner's chamber found Mr Parthasarathi lying in a pool of blood. His chair was in pieces. The lower part of his body was badly mutilated. But he was still breathing. Once he raised his hand and even shouted something in Tamil which nobody in the room could understand.

Then the body went limp.

Hema too had heard the bang but like many others she dismissed it as nothing more than the bursting of a truck tyre. Only when she saw the scramble in the street in front of her residence did she realise that something terrible had happened. It took her a few more minutes to realise that she was closely connected to what had happened. Standing near the gate she heard people on the street talking animatedly about a bomb. Then, she heard the chilling words: Commissioner's office. As soon as she heard those words, she ran towards the residence. Panting, she picked up the telephone and dialled her husband's office. The voice at the other end asked her to rush to the office. The time was around 10.20 am—ten minutes after the bang. Obviously, everybody in the office had forgotten that Mr Parthasarathi's wife should be informed before anybody else about the matter.

It took Hema a few more minutes to reach the office. As she crossed the door leading to her husband's chamber, she froze for a moment and then broke down in tears. Mr Parthasarathi was still lying in the pool of blood and she implored the office staff to rush him to the hospital. The blast had occurred thirty minutes ago. But the office staff appeared to be in utter confusion. None of them could get an ambulance to carry Mr Parthasarathi, the topmost government executive of the area, to the hospital. Ultimately, he was pushed into the rear seat of a car and was driven to the hospital with his wife trailing behind in a jeep. At the hospital, Mr Parthasarathi was wheeled straight to the operation room. The doctors, however, could do nothing. Mr Parthasarathi was already dead.

> Mr E.S. Parthasarathi used to say: "I have not harmed anyone and nobody will harm me."

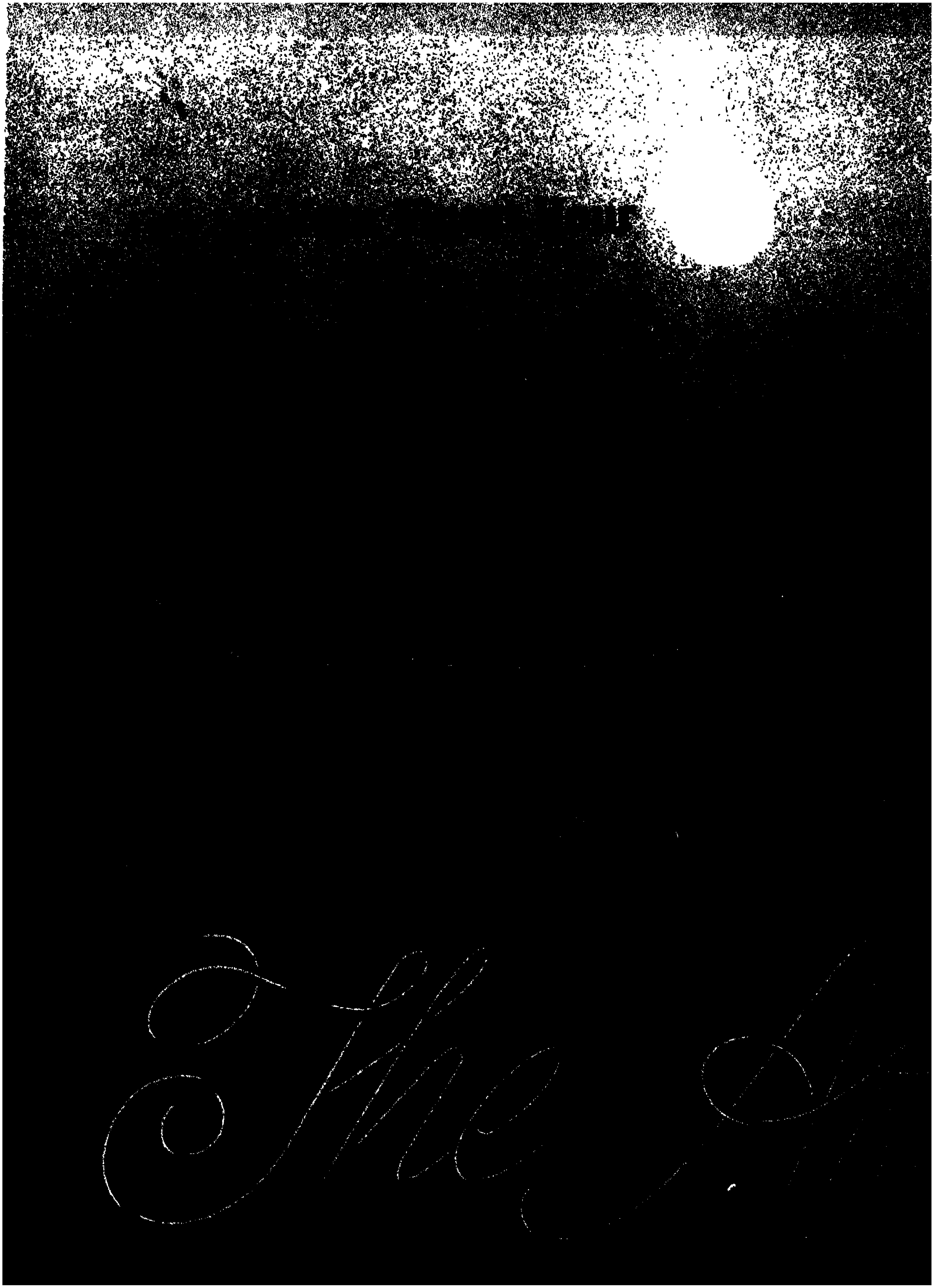
The death drove Hema to a state of perpetual shock and silence. It has also made her even more possessive about her son, Venkatesh, and daughter, Basumati. She would not let them leave her even for a moment. So upset was she that whenever she heard a noise she would scream: "Bomb..yes they are coming with bombs" and hide her children behind her. She even declined to see her husband's body during the funeral. She would rather remember her husband's face as he bade her goodbye when he left for his office on that fateful day.

There cannot be any doubt about the killers' intentions. They wanted to finish off just one person—Mr Parthasarathi. That was why they selected a bomb which would be just right for the purpose. They placed it in such a manner (under the cushion of his seat in the office) that it would hit their target only. In this way they also took care of the possibility of the device being accidentally set off to explode by either the sweeper or the peon while sweeping or dusting the place before the arrival of Mr Parthasarathi. The device was a booby trap set to go off when Mr Parthasarathi sat over it. The bomb cannot be bought off the shelf. Nor could it be set to explode by a layman. What this means is that there must have been some very skilled people behind the act. It was the work of professionals both in daring and accuracy.

Presumably the killers also knew that Mr Parthasarathi was more vulnerable in his office than at his residence, because there were fewer guards in the office. They also knew that they stood a better chance in gaining accomplices in the office. So, if Mr Parthasarathi was to be killed it had to be at his office. For planting the bomb they needed time. Nothing could have been better than the weekend. They had the entire Saturday evening and the whole of Sunday to accomplish their task. The possibility of interference was also little since there was virtually no one in the office. The device was possibly planted on Sunday and must have been at the time Mr Parthasarathi was celebrating his wife's birthday doing the round of temples with her offering prayers.

Mr Parthasarathi was planning to visit Madras on 1 May to spend a month with his parents. He had booked his tickets with Indian Airlines. But he flew in on 7 April, much earlier than was expected. It was a different homecoming. He came in dead in a coffin—a prey to hatred and violence.

Tooshar Pandit in Madras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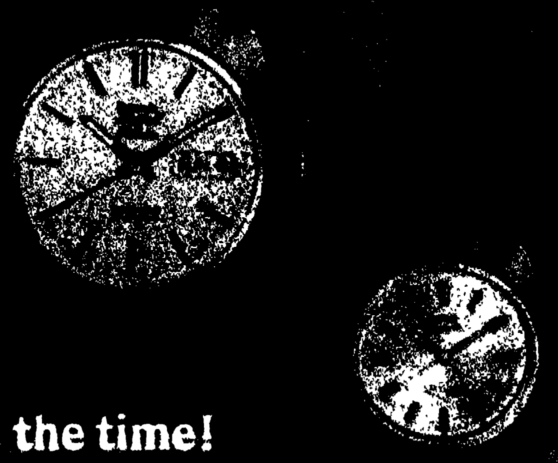

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SPECIAL REPORT

Nepal: The next ritual

Why have supporters of the multiparty system decided to boycott the 9 May poll in protest? Bhola Chatterji finds out, and asks B. P. Koirala why he had accepted the 1979 referendum verdict if he opposes elections now.

Events seem to have overtaken the most enlightened man ever to occupy Narayanhiti palace in Kathmandu. There are indications that King Birendra has been taken for a ride by some of the scheming political operators who have so long enjoyed his favour. A knowledgeable political observer, a loyalist to boot, told me recently that Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa has so manipulated and managed the coming elections on 9 May that none looked forward to them any more. The day, instead of becoming one of deliverance for most Nepalese, is now expected to be one of the saddest in their living memory. And in all this the omnipotent palace had been rendered peculiarly impotent. A great gulf has been created by the palace secretariat between the king and his people.

King Birendra

The Himalayan kingdom's first ever general election, organised on the basis of adult franchise, was held in 1959. The issue is not that the Nepalese have had to wait for 22 years for another such election but the difference between the two exercises.

The 1959 election raised the people's hopes: it gave every Nepalese a promise that none would be denied a place in the sun. But the 9 May poll makes no promise and holds out precious little hope of a tomorrow without tears. There is little doubt that the forthcoming election will only make matters worse, let alone find a way out of the impasse the country is in. For one thing, the decision of the Nepali Congress leader, B. P. Koirala, to counsel his comrades, co-workers and the people not to participate in the election reduces it to an absurdity. For another, Prime Minister Thapa's manoeuvres to stagemanage it portends an unprecedented political and economic crisis.

The common man in Nepal has been getting the worst of both worlds these past two decades, since that dreary December day in 1960 when the late King Mahendra, the present king's father, grew tired of Nepal's young experiment with democracy and introduced the partyless panchayat system of government. But the people refused to despair. And when last May King Birendra allowed the people to determine through the ballot box the future shape of the kingdom's polity it seemed that the Nepalese had not suffered in vain. For the first time in Nepal's history, and probably in that of most other Asian and African countries, a national referendum on the basis of universal adult franchise was held, allowing the people to choose between a reformed panchayat system and the multiparty system of government.

The exponents of the multiparty system lost the referendum, thanks to the clever manipulation by Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa's government. But again they did not give up hope. With their sizable share—some 45 per cent—of the total votes polled, the king's promise of a constitution incorporating the principles of universal adult franchise, direct elections, a government answerable not to the palace but to the legislature which would also elect the Prime Minister and the unflinching leadership of B. P. Koirala, they knew a better day would come.

In the brief period since then the situation has undergone a sea-change. The anti-democratic forces, which were in disarray, have rallied. And they have made the elections a foregone conclusion. The contestants now mostly belong to different, mutually hostile, groups of panchayat supporters. The people will be confronted on 9 May with nothing but Hobson's choice. Worst of all, reports indicate that Prime Minister Thapa has even ensured his personal return to the *gaddi*.

The reaction that the mention of Prime Minister Thapa's name provokes in the usually well spoken average Nepalese, is a revelation. Even most of the panchayat leaders feel the same way. As a matter of fact, after talking to former Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bista, Tulsi Giri and Matrika Prasad Koirala—all acknowledged panchayat leaders—I concluded that the Thapa government had pulled strings to create such a situation that multiparty supporters might be forced to keep themselves out of the election. If Surya Bahadur Thapa had been replaced by a more acceptable person, B. P. Koirala might have agreed to participate in the election.

The panchayat members are themselves divided into several groups, the four prominent owing allegiance to Bista, Giri, Matrika Prasad Koirala and Surya Bahadur Thapa. Tulsi Giri would go to the extent of saying that the philosophical concept of the partyless panchayat has become superfluous and the third amendment to the constitution has in a way paved the way for the gradual introduction of the multiparty system. If the real spirit of the amended constitution had been explained to the king, if the situation had been placed in its right perspective, the "irritants" that stood in the way of B. P. Koirala's participation in the election might have been removed. But that was not to be.

This is indeed a disquieting picture. But Nepal is not quite a burnt out case. As the powers that be are likely to have their way, political and economic instability will relentlessly plague the country. Whether Prime Minister Thapa once again finds himself in the saddle or Matrika Prasad Koirala is catapulted into the corridors of power, the people's demand for further reforms as well as a built-in mechanism for bringing about timely reforms in the constitution is bound to become louder and louder. Then the need for a mid-term election and a somewhat more liberal constitution will become apparent to all.

"The Constitution is not democratic"

Former premier B. P. Koirala tells Bhola Chatterji

Q: Do you think the results of the referendum (which gave the partyless panchayat group and the multiparty group 55 per cent and 45 per cent respectively of the total votes polled) held in May last year reflected the will of the people? If so, why do you oppose the implementation of the referendum verdict? Alternatively, if you believe that the referendum verdict was manipulated, why did you then accept it?

A: My interpretation of the verdict of the referendum is different from the King's. Nowhere in the referendum was the electorate asked whether they wanted the continuance of the present system. The clear choice before the electorate was a reformed panchayat. Nowhere was it mentioned that the election was being held to decide whether the people wanted a partyless political system. But half an hour after the verdict was announced the King made a statement that the verdict had gone in favour of the partyless panchayat system! I think the King misrepresented the verdict of the people.

Q: Why don't you participate in the 9 May general election on the basis of universal adult franchise?

A: About six months after the King announced that he would hold the referendum of 1979 he made a very significant declaration to the effect that three essential principles of parliamentary democracy would be incorporated in the Constitution regardless of the verdict of the referendum: (1) There would be direct election on the basis of universal adult franchise. He did not say partyless national panchayat; he took care not even to mention the word panchayat—he said National Assembly, *Vidhayaka Sabha*; (2) The Prime Minister would not be appointed by him but elected by the *Vidhayaka Sabha*; (3) The Prime Minister and his cabinet would hold office as long as they enjoyed not the King's confidence but the confidence of the House. These three basic principles of parliamentary democracy, the King said, would be incorporated in the Constitution regardless of the verdict of the referendum. After that, many Constitutional experts said that the proposed referendum would now be a redundant exercise, because the King had already conceded the essence of parliamentary democracy. There was therefore a demand for further clarification from the King as to what the people would be expected to vote for in the referendum...The general feeling was that whichever side won the end-result would be parliamentary democracy. At any rate, the concept of partylessness would be removed from the Constitution. But the people are very unhappy because only half an hour after the announcement of the referendum verdict the King said that it was a victory for the stand his father (the late King Mahendra) had taken, that the people had given the stamp of approval to the partyless system initiated by his father. That was a wrong interpretation which he imposed on the people.

Again, the King enjoined the Constitutional Reforms Commission set up after the referendum to incorporate in the Constitution not only the opinion of the majority as expressed in the referendum but also that of the minority, which means the opinion of two million voters favouring the multiparty system should also find reflection in the Constitution. But there wasn't. We were expecting a Constitution which would be acceptable to us. The Constitution is very unsatisfactory; it is not democratic; it suffers from a spirit of timidity—the giver of the Constitution had developed cold feet.

Q: Do you still believe that the palace is an indispensible factor in Nepalese politics? If so, why do you not agree to participate in the political process King Birendra has initiated?

A: As regards the King's role, let me make it clear that we are not for monarchy, rather, we are for kingship. I would not say monarchy, for there is a debate going on on whether one is a *rajabadi* or a *rajtantrabadi*. In the peculiar situation that obtains in our country the King has a role to play. We are transforming the society, we are changing its economic structure, we are changing the political structure, we are changing the social structure—in fact we socialists are engaged in a total revolution. We want that the King should also play a role in this social transformation. If we could get his assistance in this great enterprise our task would be easier. But if we use our resources to fight against the King, then the country will suffer. If we want to overthrow the King we must build up an appropriate machinery for that. In that process a situation of civil war would develop. Our political system, our economy, are too fragile to sustain such an upheaval. I have told the King and I have also said it in public that I am for kingship not because I am a sycophant, not because I am terrorised into making that kind of statement. Because the worst that the King could do has already been done to me. So I have no apprehension, nothing to fear from the King. And temptation? What rewards, what gifts could he bestow on me? Prime Ministership? I am not prepared to accept the Prime Ministership given by him.

There have been some positive indications from the palace—I have been talking so freely! I have been moving all over the country criticising the Constitution and the man who gave it. So I am not filled with despair. Some of our people are in despair; they feel that nothing can be expected of the King, he does not see the writing on the wall. But I am not that despondent, I still have confidence, because the King has seen the writing on the wall. My confidence in my line of reconciliation is based on the fact that it has borne fruit. When I came here from exile there was total darkness. People thought that I was committing some kind of suicide. Even Ganesh Man*ji* thought that the choice before us was between slow death in India and dramatic suicide in Nepal and we had chosen the latter course. I said, no, it was not that. And we have registered very big gains during the last four years. I think this is due to our line of national reconciliation. It has stirred the palace to some positive actions like the referendum. However manipulated it might be, the people were involved in it. I could move about, all the political parties could move about. And direct elections, freedom of speech and the like... I think that is the King's positive response to our line of national reconciliation, and this should not be abandoned in haste.

B. P. Koirala

BHOLA CHATTERJI

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China and India: The two are even

By SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY

NOTHING is more painful to our leftist intellectuals than the nasty Chinese habit of speaking the truth. China represents an ancient culture with a substantial foundation of Buddhism. Therefore, to an average Chinese, confession of the truth, despite past pretence to the contrary, comes naturally. (This of course goes against the precepts of communism—which are based on lies.) Since the Russians are less constrained by an ancient culture, they are more adept in spinning out yarns by the mile.

Recently the Chinese have come out with the following admissions: (1) their per capita income is only $250 as against $500 estimated by the exuberant Americans; (2) the rate of inflation in official prices is six per cent per year; (3) unemployment in China has reached 15 per cent of the labour force; and (4) discontent has led to strikes, lock-outs and smuggling.

The pipe-puffing air-conditioned marxists in India were shocked. One of them told me: "Even if it is true, must they admit it?" For years, these leftist intellectuals have been selling the line that in "socialist" countries there is no inflation, no unemployment and no worker discontent. The Russians, adept at unmitigated, unalloyed production of propaganda statistics—or simply lies—kept this facade up for the benefit of their fellow-travellers abroad. But the Chinese have brought them down to the earth.

In 1973, I had published a book comparing the economic performance of China and India. In that book, after six years of painstaking research, I had concluded that, on the average, China's growth rate was about the same as India's. There was a howl of protest, but my publisher was happy because the book sold out. Nevertheless, groups of economists were most unhappy. One lot were the Americans, who denounced me as an "Indian chauvinist pig."Those were the days when Americans were becoming overenthusiastic about China. I explained that I had been an unadulterated critic of Nehru and Indira Gandhi, and therefore could not relish my own findings. The other discontented lot were the pro-Indira Gandhi "progressive" intellectuals. Between bouts of high living, they found time to denounce me as an incorrigible reactionary, a CIA agent, a stooge of Nixon, etc! I thought they ought to be happy that their dynamic decade*wali* leader (Mrs Gandhi) and her father had not done so badly after all. The upshot of it was that I was blackballed in US universities and I lost my professorship at the Delhi University.

Statistically speaking, the Chinese growth rate for the period 1952-80, rounded off, is about 4 per cent, which incidentally is India's growth rate for the same period. China produces about twice the amount of foodgrains as India, while its population is one and a half times India's. But the growth of foodgrain output since 1957 in India is higher than China's because of our high-yielding varieties programme (credit to Mr C. Subramaniam). China has, however, deployed more fertiliser, more irrigation and more horse power in its agriculture, and therefore has a yield per hectare which is about three times India's.

But then, the higher per capita grain production in China is offset by a poor transportation system. One begins to admire India's railways and the Sardarji truck*walas* after seeing China. Therefore, China has not found it adequate to produce twice the grain output as India because it is not able to transport the food to the scarcity areas or densely populated areas of the country. Therefore, to feed its coastal cities, China imports about 10 million tons of grain.

> China represents an ancient culture with a substantial foundation of Buddhism. Therefore, to an average Chinese, confession of the truth, despite past pretence to the contrary, comes naturally. Since the Russians are less constrained by an ancient culture, they are more adept at spinning out yarns.

In the industrial sector, the Chinese have performed extremely well. While India has chalked up a 5.3 per cent growth rate China has achieved a 10 per cent growth rate. But the Chinese are not pleased. First of all, the bulk of this growth is in what they call "heavy" industry and what we call "core sector." The Chinese say that "light" industry, or consumer goods, have been neglected. Since 1979, the Chinese have given up what they term the "Stalinist" strategy of heavy industry growth. Last year, China's heavy industry grew by only 1.6 per cent while light industry grew at 17.1 per cent.

But nearly 60 per cent of the core sector production is from small industrial plants. I am wary of the quality of production. The Association of Indian Engineering Industries (AIEI) of our country has done useful work in comparing Chinese quality with Indian quality of production in this area: they found that Indians were doing better in terms of quality in machine tools and electrical machinery.

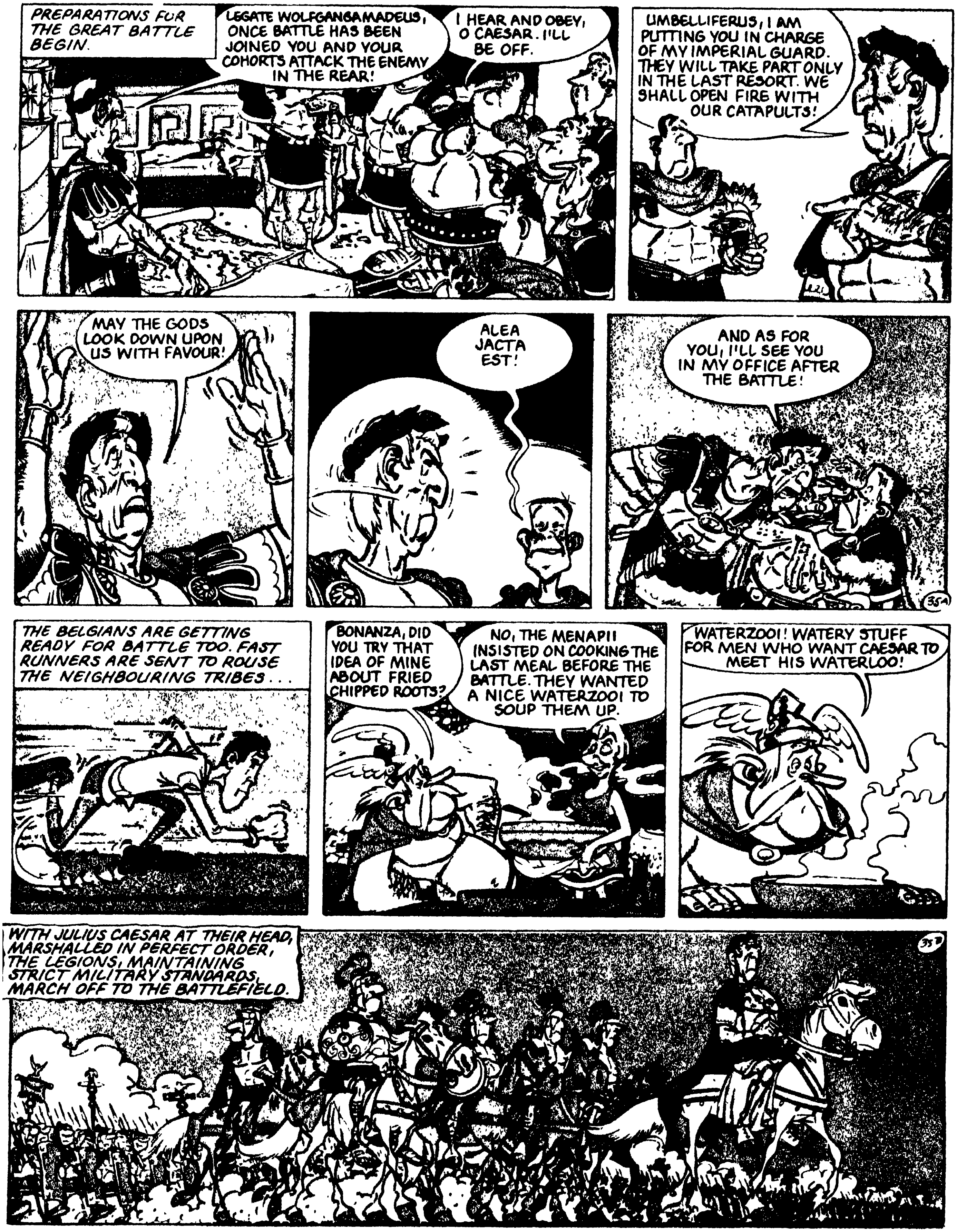
India has, of course, a larger service sector, particularly transportation and banking, than China. Because of this, the extent to which we are behind China in the industrial sector, we make up in services. So on the average we are about even, with real per capita income of about $220 each.

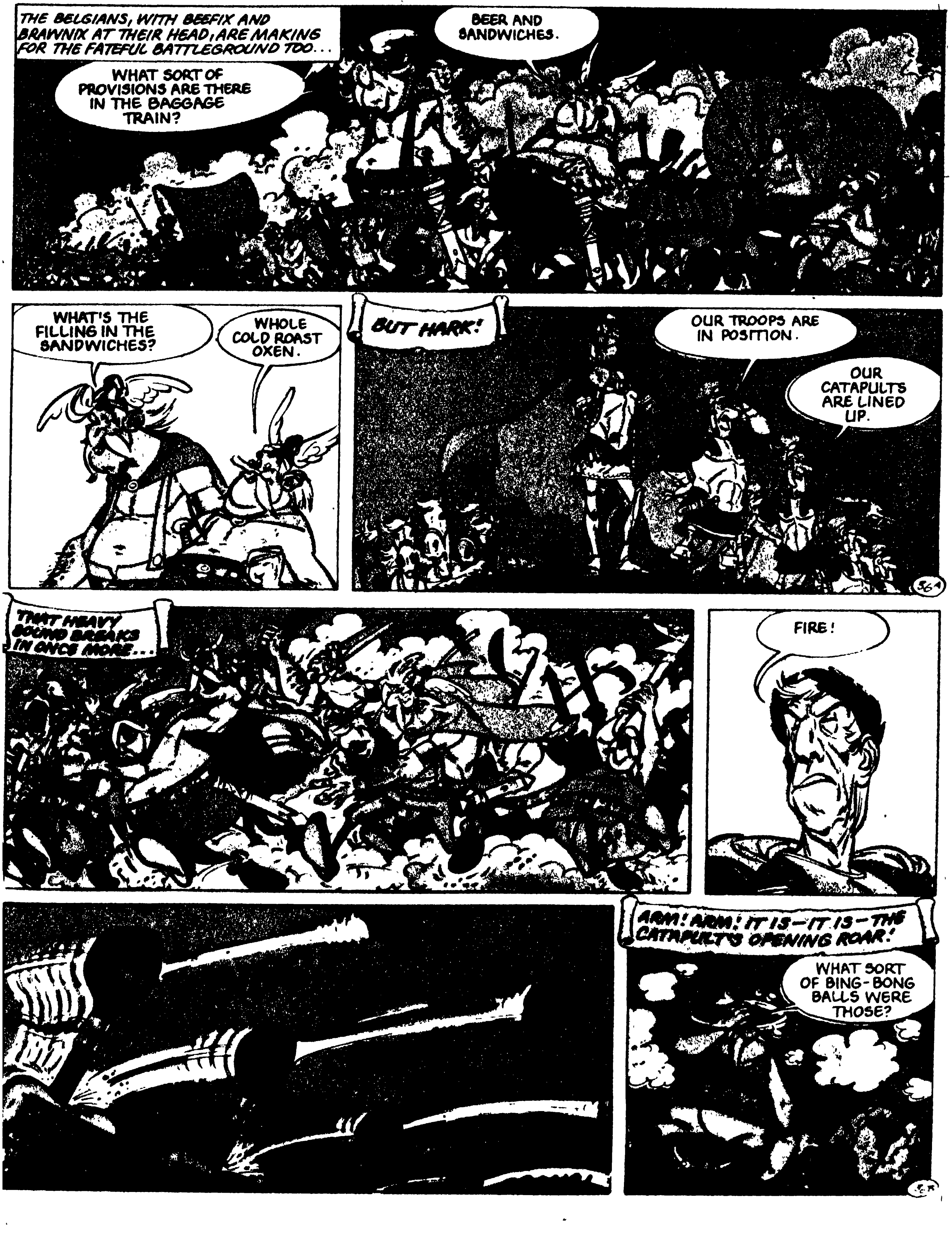
But the political climate has changed partially. The gushing Americans are still there, and they are now keen to help China obtain soft loans from the World Bank. They were in a fix because they had estimated China's per capita income at $500 which disqualifies China from receiving such aid. So, all of a sudden, I have become a hero in their eyes. "We always knew Swamy was smart," one American told a friend of mine. "After all he is from our Harvard," he added.

The Indian government is none too pleased. India has been grabbing 40 per cent of the World Bank's IDA credits. Now it will have to share this with China, whose appetite for such loans is no smaller.

It is business as usual for me. I get my quota of bouquets and brickbats. Only, the throwers change.

BELGIUM by GOSCINNY and UDERZO


PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT BATTLE BEGIN.
LEGATE WOLFGANGAMADEUS, ONCE BATTLE HAS BEEN JOINED YOU AND YOUR COHORTS ATTACK THE ENEMY IN THE REAR!
I HEAR AND OBEY, O CAESAR. I'LL BE OFF.
UMBELLIFERUS, I AM PUTTING YOU IN CHARGE OF MY IMPERIAL GUARD. THEY WILL TAKE PART ONLY IN THE LAST RESORT. WE SHALL OPEN FIRE WITH OUR CATAPULTS!
MAY THE GODS LOOK DOWN UPON US WITH FAVOUR!
ALEA JACTA EST!
AND AS FOR YOU, I'LL SEE YOU IN MY OFFICE AFTER THE BATTLE!
35a
THE BELGIANS ARE GETTING READY FOR BATTLE TOO. FAST RUNNERS ARE SENT TO ROUSE THE NEIGHBOURING TRIBES...
BONANZA, DID YOU TRY THAT IDEA OF MINE ABOUT FRIED CHIPPED ROOTS?
NO, THE MENAPII INSISTED ON COOKING THE LAST MEAL BEFORE THE BATTLE. THEY WANTED A NICE WATERZOOI TO SOUP THEM UP.
WATERZOOI! WATERY STUFF FOR MEN WHO WANT CAESAR TO MEET HIS WATERLOO!
WITH JULIUS CAESAR AT THEIR HEAD, MARSHALLED IN PERFECT ORDER, THE LEGIONS, MAINTAINING STRICT MILITARY STANDARDS, MARCH OFF TO THE BATTLEFIELD.
35b


THE BELGIANS, WITH BEEFIX AND BRAWNIX AT THEIR HEAD, ARE MAKING FOR THE FATEFUL BATTLEGROUND TOO...
WHAT SORT OF PROVISIONS ARE THERE IN THE BAGGAGE TRAIN?
BEER AND SANDWICHES.
WHAT'S THE FILLING IN THE SANDWICHES?
WHOLE COLD ROAST OXEN.
BUT HARK!
OUR TROOPS ARE IN POSITION.
OUR CATAPULTS ARE LINED UP.
56A
THAT HEAVY SOUND BREAKS IN ONCE MORE...
FIRE!
ARM! ARM! IT IS—IT IS—THE CATAPULT'S OPENING ROAR!
WHAT SORT OF BING-BONG BALLS WERE THOSE?

WHAT IS LIFE? IS THERE LIFE ANYWHERE ELSE?

If life evolves on each habitable planet, and if the average civilisation lasts 10m years, then about 1m advanced communities may inhabit the Milky Way. And, on average, about one should reach interstellar radio communication with the more advanced civilisations each decade. It is plausible that the young planet earth may reach this stage in the next few decades, and there are more eerie possibilities...

Throughout recorded history, man has speculated that he may not be alone in the universe. "In other regions of space," asserted Lucretius 2,000 years ago, "there are other earths, inhabited by people and animals." Scientists have now developed technology that should find out whether Lucretius was right.

They are completing a prototype of a cheap machine that could detect any civilisation with the technology to send powerful radio signals among the billions of stars in the Milky Way galaxy. If there prove to be other civilisations in the planets round the few hundred stars closest to earth, there is also a chance that earthlings will be able to watch their television programmes. Muppets in space? J. R. goes galactic? There are more exciting possibilities.

Because of the extreme youth of Homo sapiens, man may be able to observe other civilisations before they watch him. Any alien civilisations are almost certainly older than mankind's and their radio signals would have had more time to reach earth, whereas it is only in recent years that man has used technology that would betray his presence to aliens. His tell-tale fingerprint would not yet be detectable many light-years from earth.

All this conjecture rests on rather special assumptions, not merely that life exists elsewhere in the universe but also that it is intelligent. Moreover, it assumes that another civilisation has developed a technology compatible with man's.

How reasonable are any of these assumptions and what are their implications? The answers given in this article are inevitably speculative. First question: is there life elsewhere? Cagey answer: scientists don't even agree on what life is, let alone anything else.

What is life?

There is no difficulty recognising life on earth. Men, mice, mushrooms and microbes are all undeniably living. Yet what do they have in common?

Frequently cited are the ability to reproduce, to respond to external stimuli and to grow. But some manifestly inanimate things share such properties. Flames readily reproduce; crystals both reproduce and grow into more organised structures; bubbles respond to external stimuli by retreating when approached.

Furthermore, on closer examination, there is actually no clear division between what is living and what is not. Viruses are a classic example. Although a virus shares the basic genetic mechanism of all living things, it fails to meet one standard criterion for life: it cannot reproduce by itself. It can multiply only by invading a host cell and getting the host to manufacture more viruses.

It is possible therefore that one might stumble on life of a primitive sort without recognising it as such. This is one reason why finding another technological civilisation is attractive as a means of getting unequivocal proof of life elsewhere. But that implies a very high degree of organisation in the intelligent beings' physical structure. This, in turn, implies some form of evolution.

How did life begin on earth?

From earth's fossil record, one can infer that the present intricate, interdependent network of different life forms is the product of an immense number of successive steps towards greater complexity. Some 500m years ago, there were no creatures with backbones; two billion years ago, there were no life forms more complicated than a single cell.

Given this progression from simplicity to complexity, it is plausible that the creation of life on earth was simply another step in the general evolutionary sequence, that living matter was created unaided and spontaneously out of inanimate chemicals.

The first serious investigation of this possibility was conducted by Dr Stanley Miller and Dr Harold Urey in 1953. They hit on the idea that, if the conditions believed to have prevailed on the primeval earth were reproduced in the laboratory, the first steps towards the chemical synthesis of living material might be induced to occur. In accordance with then prevailing ideas about earth's primeval oceans, they filled a flask with methane, hydrogen, ammonia and water.

The experiment lasted several days. Dr Urey and Dr Miller simulated lightning by passing an electric spark through the chemical mixture. The liquid slowly turned red and, when analysed, was found to contain large quantities of organic molecules among which were ones known as amino acids, the building blocks of proteins.

To some, it seemed that man was on the road to creating life in the laboratory. But it is not that simple. Amino acids are not a sufficient or even necessary condition for life to appear. They are nothing but building blocks of proteins. They cannot even put themselves together into useful proteins without instructions, far less replicate.

What you really need are nucleic acids. These are the key to replication; they also contain all the instructions needed not only to make amino acids but also to stitch them together into useful proteins. In short, nucleic acids are the material of genes and therefore the very stuff of life.

Human genes are made of a type of nucleic acid called deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). The appearance of self-replicating molecules of DNA—or its sister molecule, RNA—is the most likely origin of life. These could subsist without amino acids and proteins, though these chemicals are necessary for more sophisticated life forms to appear.

Since 1953 other researchers have contrived to construct in the test tube molecules that might, on a generous interpretation, pass as nucleic acids or proteins. But nobody has succeeded in getting the parts to come together spontaneously into a working system.

Sceptics rightly say the numerical odds against DNA appearing randomly from a soup of simple molecular subunits are huge. Familiar inorganic substances consist of very small numbers of atoms bound loosely together. For example, oxygen consists of two atoms; water and carbon dioxide each consist of three atoms. In contrast, a gene contains millions of atoms. Their arrangement is not just random but intricately organised in a highly specific way.

But evolutionists need not feel defeated. It took perhaps 100-500m years from the time when earth cooled sufficiently to become habitable to the time when life first appeared. Even if it took only 100m years, that is nearly 4m times as long as from the Urey-Miller experiment to the present day. And, instead of a few test tubes, evolution had the whole ocean.

Fossil discoveries are pushing backwards the time when life originated. There is now some evidence of fossil microbes in rocks 3.8 billion years old, though the evidence is disputed. It seems that the period it took for life to evolve from inorganic chemicals was nearer 100m years than 500m.

To some scientists, this relative promptness in the appearance of life on earth itself suggests that life is an automatic and inevitable consequence of appropriate physical conditions, arising naturally whenever the right raw materials are available. If so, then the origin of life should be not a unique event but rather a common feature of the universe.

Aliens at large?

Since Copernicus, man has had to learn and relearn the salutary lesson that there is nothing special or privileged about the earth. It is a typical planet near a typical star in a typical region of a typical galaxy—the Milky Way. If life does automatically form under the right conditions, the quest for extraterrestrial life should now turn to other parts of the universe where the conditions might be fulfilled.

A search in earth's immediate neighbourhood is not promising. Its eight sister planets all differ from the earth in conspicuous and possibly lethal ways. Nevertheless, the other planets in the solar system are not a complete write-off. By tradition, Mars is the most likely candidate for life. The Martian climate is hardly equable—intense cold and an extremely thin atmosphere. Yet some very primitive organisms could survive there. It is important to remember that life has evolved on earth in a remarkable variety of forms, each adapted to part of a vast range of physical conditions. For example, bacteria are known that can survive in the boiling eruptions from geysers, while other microbes survive the intense cold of Antarctica. Even if conditions on Mars could not support earth-life as it has now evolved, life may have once evolved in a different way to flourish in the Martian conditions.

Mars was, in fact, the subject of detailed life-detection experiment as part of two Viking space probes. Four separate experiments attempted to detect organisms in the Martian soil. One experiment yielded positive results, another was negative and two gave unexpected and puzzling results. A negative result does not mean that there is no life on Mars—only that the experiment failed to detect it. The issue of life on Mars is still open.

Hopes for life elsewhere in the solar system also lie with Jupiter or the large moon of Saturn known as Titan. Many scientists believe that conditions on Jupiter, though very cold in the outer layers, resemble the primeval earth. In some senses, the atmosphere of Jupiter—thick with gases like methane and ammonia—is a sort of gigantic Urey-Miller experiment. In its multi-layered structuring, there is wide range of different chemical and physical conditions, some of which ought to suit primitive life. Titan, though known to be disappointingly cold, has a dense atmosphere of nitrogen, and could even possess liquid nitrogen seas.

An artist's impression of the Pioneer Multiprobe (left) and Orbiter approaching Venus to carry out detailed investigations of the planet in late 1978

The greatest hope must rest, however, beyond the solar system among the stars. The Milky Way galaxy alone contains 100 billion other suns, many of which could be accompanied by planets similar enough to earth to make them suitable abodes of life. As man's best telescopes cannot directly detect these other planets, this assumption rests on theoretical arguments only. Though opinions differ about the probable number of earth-like planets, and about precisely how close to terrestrial conditions a habitable planet needs to be, the numbers of other suns are so large that it would be surprising if there were no other suitable planets.

Some optimists estimate that there may be hundreds of millions of planets in the Milky Way on which some sort of life ought now to exist. Others disagree. Nobody knows for sure.

Life as we don't know it

Anyway, why should alien biology conform to tightly restrictive terrestrial principles? Perhaps life can form in countless other ways which do not involve proteins and nucleic acids. This would increase the chances of life existing elsewhere.

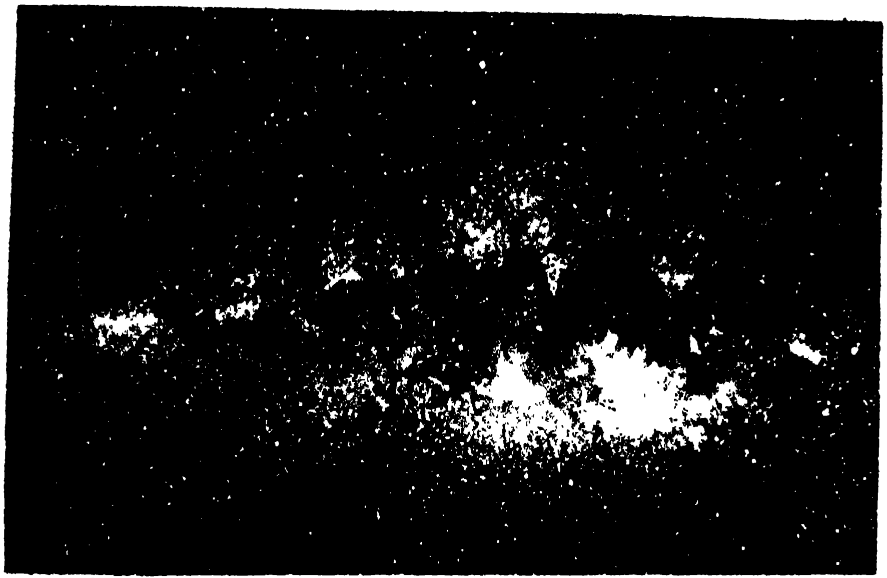
Can one really suppose that such a specifically intricate structure as DNA would be the only route to biology? What about alternative chemical elements to the carbon that earthly life uses?

What makes an atom of carbon special is the way it can form bonds with four neighbouring atoms, facilitating the construction of complex molecules. Silicon also has this capacity so that alternative biologies might be created out of silicon.

One suggestion is that silicon might combine initially with four oxygen atoms, to make silicates, which would then combine with other molecules. At around 1,000°C, silicates soften and could rearrange themselves into complex structures, from which life might evolve. A still more bizzare speculation is that life (of a sort) could form on the surface of neutron stars where intense magnetic fields would grossly distort the atoms in such a way as to enable them to combine into complex polymer shapes.

A few scientists have even proposed that alien life could be based, not on chemistry at all, but on some other complex physical process. The astronomer, Sir Fred Hoyle, wrote a novel in which huge clouds of tenuous interstellar gases were organised into a thinking, purposeful individual, moving from star to star to "feed" off stellar heat.

In recent years, Sir Fred has built a variant theory, in all scientific earnestness, in which he claims that the microscopic grains of material that have been identified in interstellar clouds are actually bacteria. He challenges the traditional assumption that life began on earth and revives the theory of a nineteenth-century Swede, Arrhenius, who proposed that bacteria



The Milky Way

disperse through interstellar space, propelled by radiation pressure from starlight.

In Sir Fred's version, an enormous reservoir of different microbes lies spewed across the galaxy, to be swept up by any suitable host body, such as a planet or comet. In this way, not only did life establish itself on earth at the first available moment, but over the aeons, earth has been continually "re-infected." Indeed, Sir Fred goes so far as to claim that this contamination continues today, and is responsible for major world epidemics. Biologists are unconvinced. One eminent expert on microbes writes the theory off as science fiction.

Intelligent life?

The discovery of the smallest extraterrestrial microbes might forever alter man's perspective of earth's place in the universe. But a conversation with an alien civilisation would be much more fun.

No evidence for an alien civilisation has yet been found and there have been some false alarms. The astronomer Percival Lowell was certain 100 years ago that an advanced civilisation had constructed an elaborate network of canals on Mars. He even published maps of them. But the vague shapes he thought he perceived through his telescope were mere figments.

Another false alarm occurred in the 1960s at Cambridge, England. Astronomers picked up radar signals that pulsated at regular intervals. Were they being sent by aliens? The Cambridge astronomers were sceptical but sufficiently struck by the possibility to label the source of the signals LGM-1 (standing for little green man). It is now known that the source was a rapidly spinning and collapsed star, today called a pulsar.

But there are grounds for supporting alien intelligence as a hypothesis. On earth, intelligence seems to have good survival value. Intelligence is found in other, quite dissimilar creatures to man, such as dolphins. Once life has arisen on a planet, it does seem logical that it should gradually and systematically evolve, into more complex varieties, so that (as the competition among species becomes fiercer) intelligent behaviour gains a selective advantage. Indeed, the jump from a microbe to a man seems easier than that from simple molecules to the first microbe.

According to this philosophy, if life is widespread throughout the universe, then so is intelligence and, presumably, technology. This is what makes it seem worthwhile to search for extraterrestrial life by looking for signs of its technology.

Detecting aliens

How to detect an alien community? The most promising strategy is to search radio signals, using radio telescopes. Radio signals being sent by intelligent beings, whether to each other or to other civilisations, would be distinguishable from the normal radio murmur of stars and interstellar clouds by the way in which they varied over time. No matter what technique was used to modulate the signals, it would be impossible to transmit intelligent messages without modulation.

A radio telescope, as powerful as the Arecibo observatory in Puerto Rico could detect signals from a twin of itself anywhere across the 100,000 light-years of the Milky Way galaxy. It could detect the presence of television transmissions over 300 light-years, a distance covering 400,000 stars. But so far attempts to find alien signals, using such telescopes, have been puny.

The problem has been to know where to tune in, especially among the billions of radio channels the aliens might choose from. This problem could be solved by a new and cheap machine now being completed in America.

The idea is to fit existing telescopes with something called a multi-channel spectrum analyser, which will chop the spectrum of radio channels into bits. A $200,000 prototype, capable of listening in on 65,000 radio channels simultaneously, will be ready this summer. After trials, a version that can simultaneously handle 10m channels will be designed. At present prices, this would cost $2m. But the cost of the computer technology involved is falling rapidly, so that even the Reagan administration might think it could afford a channel chopper, without risking one of Senator Proxmire's golden fleece awards for wasteful research.

The plan is that, having searched one set of 10m channels, the spectrum analyser will switch to another 10m channels, and then to another. An exhaustive search would first be made of all the 773 stars within 80 light-years of earth that are of a similar type to the sun, plus a more cursory sweep of more distant parts of the galaxy. From the latter, only very powerful radio signals would be picked up—such as those used by man to communicate with spaceships or in defence.

Of course, all this presupposes that any advanced civilisation will use radio signals. An "uncontacted" tribe in New Guinea might make a similar assumption about smoke signals. But there are two answers to this objection. One is that radio waves are so intrinsically attractive as a means of communication that there must be a reasonable chance of any intelligent aliens using them, at least for some purpose. The other is that, even if extraterrestrials employ something more advanced than radio among themselves, they would probably use the technology appropriate to a fledgling community in trying to contact outsiders.

But why should "they" bother to send signals to man? How do "they" even know man exists and possesses the technology to detect their signals? What is the point of communicating anyway, when (even at the speed of light) messages are likely to take decades to travel and more decades to obtain a response?

Advocates of communication are not dismayed by these problems, because of the exciting fact that other civilisations may be much older than mankind. The earth, at 4.5 billion years old, is only about one-third the age of the galaxy. It has taken nearly 4 billion years for life on earth to evolve from primitive microbes to modern technology. If life developed this "rapidly" on the planets that formed in the early history of the galaxy, there could have been technological communities before the earth even existed.

The capabilities of any alien technology that has lasted for millions, or even thousands of millions, of years are incalculable. A little matter like signalling every star in the galaxy might be trivial for such a civilisation. And with millennia upon millennia of history—and perhaps much greater longevity than that of man—a transmission time of a few decades would be quite acceptable. Moreover, any

alien society intending to establish contact with newly arisen technological communities would figure out the most probable communication system (ie, radio) likely to be employed during its early development.

According to this reasoning, it is not only probable that Nasa's multichannel spectrum analyser will detect the chatterings of other civilisations.

It is also likely that the aliens will have aimed some of their transmissions deliberately so that other civilisations can easily detect them.

It is true that the aliens may not be very impressed by the first feeble attempts at communication of a technological society as primitive, in these cosmic terms, as today's Americans. The Voyager spacecraft, one of which recently shot past Saturn, will eventually leave the solar system. Affixed to each craft is a phonograph record containing a large miscellany of information about earth encoded so that any intelligent aliens could crack the code. There are pictures of earth and its inhabitants; illustrations of DNA and of the differences between men and women; music from Louis Armstrong and Mozart; greetings in languages ranging from Aramaic to Urdu; and a message from President Carter.

It is most unlikely that an alien civilisation will ever actually stumble on this ragbag. It was a publicity stunt aimed by Nasa mainly for human consumption. But, if another civilisation were to find it, there should be little difficulty interpreting the messages.

Newcomers

Stars and planets are continually being born in the Milky Way. If life appears and evolves on each habitable planet, more and more technological communities must arise. If one assumes that this process is inevitable in any planetary system surrounding a star like the sun, then the rate at which new communities could achieve technology for interstellar radio communication works out at roughly one per decade in the whole galaxy.

This is a remarkable suggestion, for man's own radio telescope technology is only three decades old. It would follow that humans must be the newcomers in the galactic radio club. All the other transmitting communities will be more advanced.

The number of such communities that might actually exist depends crucially on the life expectancy of a civilisation. If earth's civilisation is destroyed tomorrow, and man's way of managing his civilisation is typical, then on average only one community capable of interstellar communication would exist in the galaxy at any one time. Man would hold that distinction today. Alternatively, if a typical advanced community survives for, say, 10m years, then about 1m may currently inhabit the Milky Way, nearly all of them well ahead of man technologically.

This raises a difficult and intriguing question once posed by the physicist, Enrico Fermi. If life is even sporadically extant in the galaxy, and if advanced communities arose millions of years ago, why haven't such communities colonised the entire galaxy by now?

True, the popular Dr Who image—of giant space rockets blasting through the light barrier and traversing the galaxy in a few years—finds no support in modern physics. The speed of light is an unbreakable barrier and the energy needed to achieve even a substantial fraction of this speed is colossal. To accelerate a 1000 tonne payload to 70% of the speed of light would require more energy than the entire world would consume, at present levels of energy consumption, over 10,000 years.

Nevertheless, systematic colonisation of the galaxy might be achieved using a different strategy. Dr Gerard O'Neill, an American physicist, has conducted detailed feasibility studies of huge cylindrical space stations, several miles long, in which thousands of people could live permanently in a self-sufficient world.

Dr O'Neill concludes that such space colonies could be established using present puny earth-technology. If the colony could generate its own power supply, then the space station might quit the solar system altogether and trundle slowly across the galaxy, a sort of space ark.

At present speeds for man-made spacecraft—several thousand mph—it might take 10,000 years to reach the nearest star, but eventually some future generation of colonists could establish themselves on another planet. After another few thousand years, that planet would be fully populated and a further expedition could be sent out. Adopting this strategy, the entire galaxy might be populated in 10m years—a brief fraction of the galaxy's age. It would need only one such colonising species to arise during the galaxy's 10 billion-14 billion year lifetime, and the Milky Way would be teeming with this species. So where are they?

The dilemma is a serious one for those who believe in the existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe. Various resolutions can be envisaged. For example, perhaps they are here, but man is too dim to notice—much as ants go about their business oblivious of human scrutiny.

Or maybe there is an inbuilt self-destruct mechanism in all technological societies aggressive enough to indulge in space colonisation. Perhaps there are as yet unforeseen problems with long-range space travel, or perhaps earth is so exotic, compared with other habitable planets, that it would be hostile to most alien life forms. Or perhaps, against the odds, earth is unique.

Galileo

Darwin

The UFO buffs claim that the aliens have already arrived. If so, they are remarkably unobtrusive. It is hard to see the point of an interstellar voyage, involving a monumental investment of resources, culminating in nothing more than fleeting visits to a potato field in the English county of Wiltshire (as in one "reported" case).

So what lies behind the many thousands of reports of UFOs? One clue is that the descriptions of phenomena officially described as UFOs differ little from descriptions of IFOs—subsequently identified flying objects, misperceived by the witnesses.

It is easy even for scientists to get carried away by the search for extraterrestrials. The line between science and science fiction is sometimes very thin. So much is speculation about the unknown.

One can, however, place limits on the speculation. There is good evidence that the physical laws which apply inside the solar system also apply outside it. That still leaves room for a lot of eerie possibilities.

For example, this article has tacitly assumed that advanced intelligence is necessarily associated with life. Is this reasonable? In any dialogue with extraterrestrials, computers would play an important part. It is possible that a civilisation might die out, leaving behind thinking machines, programmed to carry on without their creators. If biological organisms are only a transitory phase in the evolution of intelligence, then one must be prepared for interstellar dialogue, not with little green men, but with a superchip.

Before the end of this century, the discovery of some sort of alien intelligence is a real possibility. Would this lead to the kind of clash between science and religion that the discoveries of Galileo and Darwin caused? Some of the newer, fundamentalist churches are still fighting Darwin himself, with a more extreme position than Bishop Wilberforce took against Darwin's ideas in the nineteenth century. But the older churches are now more receptive to science. The Catholic church is at last reconsidering its opposition to Galileo.

There is really no need for a clash between science and religion. The concept God is essentially metaphysical. Most theologians now reject the idea of God "out there," located somewhere in space. Metaphysics means, literally, beyond physics, which implies that physics can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God. There is a point where science ends and religion, if you believe in it, begins.

By arrangement with *The Economist*

Star wars of the HMV-Polydor kind

The Nazia-Biddu combination strikes gold

Biddu

On the very day it was released in April, the LP titled *Disco Deewane* sold 1,15,000 copies, the first disc in the history of Indian music to turn 'gold' in 24 hours. The names that brought this overnight success were already familiar to Indian music lovers—Biddu, the London-based Indian musician who composed the tune for the *Qurbani* hit *Aap jaisa koi* and Nazia Hassan, the Karachi-born teenager who sang the number to Zeenat Aman's gyrations in the film. In *Disco Deewane*, Nazia belts out ten lively Hindi numbers, some of them written by her younger brother Zoheb who has accompanied her on two of the five songs for which he has also composed the music with Biddu. The freshness and vitality which Nazia showed in the *Qurbani* solo is more than confirmed in the new album. It is not difficult to see why the record was snapped up in hours. What makes its runaway popularity remarkable is that none of the songs are film songs.

In a country where film-based music accounts for 65% of total record sales, releasing a non-filmy album like *Disco Deewane* amounts to a calculated risk. With the novelty of Nazia Hassan and Biddu's track record (27 million discs sold in the West), an experiment in Western-oriented Indian music was worth the risk. During 1980, the three best-selling film albums became hits on the strength of a single song each—*Aap jaisa koi (Qurbani), Om shanti om (Karz),* and *Hari om hari (Pyara Dushman).* If one Nazia number could make the *Qurbani* record an all-time hit, imagine what ten songs by Nazia backed by Biddu could achieve! If Nazia could record an exclusive album, felt the music pundits, then it would be a runaway success. Both Polydor (now Music India) which had released the *Qurbani* music, and HMV which was eyeing its success with envy, were on the same wave-length. The race to sign Nazia and Biddu became a prize fight between the two record companies, with all the smart deals, hard-sell and promotional one-upmanship that one associates with the entertainment industry.

Mr Shashi Patel, managing director of Polydor, first approached Nazia Hassan's father, a businessman in London, with the proposal for an exclusive album. Mr Vinothkumar, HMV's man in London, got wind of the offer. Soon Mr Anil Sud, managing director of Gramophone Company of India, dashed to London with a similar contract. Mr Hassan had very little to choose between the two offers. Then Mr Sud pulled out his trump card: HMV, with its EMI connections, would release the album simultaneously in UK, India *and* Pakistan. Polydor had no arrangement for releasing the record in Pakistan. So enthused was Mr Hassan at the prospect of his daughter becoming well-known, back home in Pakistan as an international singer, that he accepted Mr Sud's proposal. In addition, he offered to foot 50% of the recording charges, estimated at around Rs 3,70,000. (The album was recorded on 24-track stereophonic equipment at EMI's Abbey Road Studios in London.) Mr Hassan and Biddu were assured a cut of the royalties and Mr Sud walked away with the contract last December.

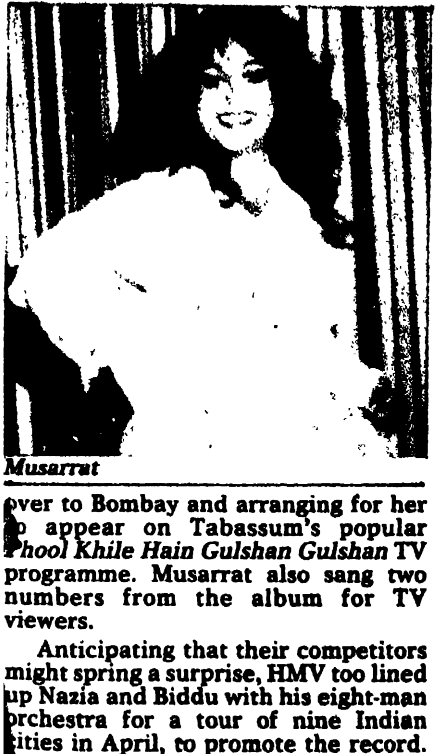
After HMV had pulled off this coup, nothing could soothe Mr Patel's ruffled feathers. Polydor reacted by releasing an English version of the *Qurbani* album, sung by Sharon Prabhakar. Mr Patel next went shopping abroad for an international combination that would surpass the Nazia-Biddu pair in popularity. He succeeded in putting together a package the Polydor people proudly call the three Ms—Boney M, Mahendra Kapoor and a new discovery, Musarrat Nazir, yet another Pakistani singer, born in Kashmir and now settled in Canada. Polydor purchased the rights to the instrumental backing tracks of some of the popular Boney M chartbusters taken mainly from their album *Oceans of Fantasy.* Along with these tracks Mahendra Kapoor and Musarrat have recorded disco numbers written by Amit Khanna and Dr Arshad Majeed. Composer Peter Moss who has many international hits to his credit, orchestrated the musical arrangements for the Polydor album (called M3) which was also cut in London at the Ivan Berg Studios. The big surprise of the album is Musarrat, Pakistan's award-winning screen-star who has since become a familiar face on BBC and Canadian TV besides winning the Pierre Trudeau award for Personality of the Year. Musarrat's first album (*Horizons)* of Urdu *ghazals* and Punjabi *geets* has also proved a hot favourite in North America.

Nazia Hassan

Polydor, however, was not content with releasing a sensational alternative to Nazia. It was keen to steal the thunder from HMV over the launch of *Disco Deewane* which was scheduled for 3 April, Nazia's sixteenth birthday. While HMV was funnelling Rs seven lakhs into TV clips, sponsored radio programmes, press releases, audio-visuals and posters to drum up a national frenzy over the Nazia album, Polydor was working silently behind the scenes.

Meanwhile, HMV ran into rough weather with Mr Hassan who demanded the pre-launch press advertisements be withdrawn since they linked his daughter's name suggestively with Biddu's (*What has Nazia...Biddu been up to lately in London? They're going to give you a big surprise any day now.)* Finally, he was convinced to change his mind.

The day the HMV teaser campaign came out in the national press, Polydor struck with its own series of advertisements in the Bombay papers, announcing its new album. Obviously, *M3* was not ready for an all-India release but a simultaneous launch, at least in Bombay, was considered crucial to give *Disco Deewane* stiff competition. Both albums went on sale the same day. HMV grabbed the limelight by inviting filmstars, Shashi and Jennifer Kapoor to release *Disco Deewane* in Bombay. In an unprecedented publicity gimmick, the walls outside HMV's Bombay office were decorated with giant blow-ups of Nazia while two speakers perched on window sills blared out tunes from the album, causing a traffic jam on the busy Pherozeshah Mehta Road. Polydor, however, went one better by flying Musarrat



Musarrat

over to Bombay and arranging for her o appear on Tabassum's popular *Phool Khile Hain Gulshan Gulshan* TV programme. Musarrat also sang two numbers from the album for TV viewers.

Anticipating that their competitors might spring a surprise, HMV too lined up Nazia and Biddu with his eight-man orchestra for a tour of nine Indian ities in April, to promote the record. The tour was dropped since Nazia had o appear for her Oxford entrance xaminations in April. As it turned ut, *Disco Deewane* struck instant gold ithout her personal appearance, and oon recorded sales of two lakh copies become a platinum disc. The Musart album may take a little longer but lydor executives are sure the triple- cocktail will produce moneyinning results.

mi Hafizji

Nuclear threat: novelist's favourite theme

New Delhi: Closely following the Lapierre-Collins bestseller, *The Fifth Horseman* (published by Vikas), Indian readers will soon have another book to read with the same plot: Colin Mandeville's *The Last Days of New York?* (being reprinted by Allied Publishers), which weaves a thriller out of a band of fanatic Palestinian terrorists who hold New York at ransom with a remote controlled atom bomb hidden somewhere in the city. Thanks to the oil crisis and a series of hijackings by terrorists fighting for the Palestinian liberation movement, the Arabs have become the new characters in everyday folklore right from Hollywood to Australia.

But, *The Fifth Horseman* and *The Last Days of New York?* are not the only books on this subject. Mandeville has himself admitted that when he completed his book in June 1978 he had not even heard of Lapierre and Collins but subsequently discovered that *Hostage London*, *Seven Days to Noon* and *If Paris was the Hostage* dealt with similar themes.

In his book, Mandeville raises a number of questions. For instance, was the New York electricity blackout of November 1965, a coverup for a deliberate electricity cut-off to prevent electrically charging a computer masterminding an atom bomb hidden by terrorists? An interesting thought. Mandeville's book has a sequence where the US President asks the association of New York power companies to stop supplying electricity to the city in order to stall just that. Alternately, coming closer to the present, could the few reported losses (or thefts) of plutonium and uranium be the work of terrorists? This was a suggestion first made by the *Economist Foreign Report*—a newsletter published by the *Economist*, London, and circulated only among subscribers—and subsequently picked up by Mandeville. His novel also has Khaled as a character. Khaled, incidentally, was deputy to the notorious terrorist leader Carlos (now retired at Tripoli), when, some years back, they broke into an OPEC conference at Vienna and held the OPEC oil ministers as hostages.

Mandeville's novel, incidentally, has not gone unnoticed in Bombay's film industry. Director Shyam Benegal and producer Shashi Kapoor have evinced an interest in an international co-production on Mandeville's novel. The reason: India plays an important part in the novel.

As for the recent boom in the west in novels on Palestinian terrorists, Mandeville says it is because of a slowly increasing awareness of the Arabs as people—and not as ogres.

Anil Saari

CONGRESS(U)

The battle for the presidency

Trivandrum: With less than a month to go for the election of the next Congress(U) president, to be held during the plenary session of the party in Aurangabad next month, the Congress(U) finds itself a house divided with three leaders vying for the presidentship: the present Congress(U) president Mr D. Devaraj Urs, Babu Jagjivan Ram and Mr Sharad Pawar. Until recently there was a possibility of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee(U) president, Mr A. K. Antony joining the race, especially as a section of the Kerala Congress(U) wanted the young dynamic leader to become the party president "keeping out the discredited and ambitious leaders."

Mr Antony's name was first tipped for party presidentship, recently by Mr Nazir Ahmed Siddique, vice-president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee(U). According to sources within the party, Mr Siddique had visited Kerala on a secret mission on behalf of a group which did not want Mr Devaraj Urs to be re-elected president. He spoke to Mr Antony and assured him the support of the Karnataka group if he agreed to contest the elections.

But Mr Antony rejected the offer, and instead decided to support Mr Sharad Pawar. The reason: Mr Rajni Patel had requested him to do so. And Mr Antony had his reasons for obliging Mr Patel, who is known to be a major financier of the Congress(U) in Kerala. In the last Assembly elections for instance, Mr Rajni Patel had contributed Rs 10 lakhs to the Congress(U). It was also on the advice of Mr Patel that Mr Antony decided to support the left parties in the formation of the present Kerala coalition government.

Meanwhile, Babu Jagjivan Ram paid a brief visit to Kerala and addressed a press conference at Cochin. Babuji had visited Kerala to seek the support of Mr Antony for the Congress(U) elections. Mr Antony, however, made it clear to Babuji that he had already decided to support Mr Pawar. It was also at the press conference at Cochin that Babuji threw his hat into the ring by offering to take over the leadership of Congress(U). When asked if he would be happy to take over as president of the party, he said, "I would not be unhappy."

There are also reports that Mr Jagjivan Ram had visited Kerala on the advice of Mr Devaraj Urs. Perhaps, Mr Urs's intention was to create a tussle between Babuji and Mr Pawar, so that a situation would be created which would enable him to win the elections easily. The answer will emerge in May.

G. S. Kartha

RAJASTHAN

Next in line, Pahadia?

Jaipur: Mr Jagannath Pahadia's days as the CM appear to be numbered. Mrs Gandhi has already assessed the charges levelled at him by his own party members and is convinced that his continuation in office will be [illegible] for her party.

The first positive indication of dark clouds ahead of Mr Pahadia came on 28 March when the CM had to withdraw his nominee to make way for Mr Ahmed Bux Sindhi in the election of deputy speaker of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha. It was only after the nomination papers of Mr Taquiuddin—Mr Pahadia's candidate for deputy speakership—had been filed that the CM summoned two senior members of the party to inform them about the nomination. The CM's move was naturally resented by the senior members. Meanwhile, word had reached the high command that V. C. Shukla had been talking to Mr Pahadia after he was dropped from the central cabinet. This was more than the high command could swallow. Mr Pahadia was asked to withdraw the candidature of Mr Taquiuddin and get Mr Ahmed Bux Sindhi elected, instead. Mr Sindhi is one of the four MLAs who had met Mrs Gandhi to apprise her of the utter chaos prevailing in the party. They had also submitted a written memorandum to the PM enlisting charges against him.

Shukla with Pahadia and Antulay

In a bid to silence the voice of the dissidents, Mr Pahadia had earlier requested the centre to send an observer to the state who would find out on behalf of the centre whether the charges levelled against the CM were valid or not. Unfortunately, for the CM not only did Mr Buta Singh—the observer from the centre—confirm the complaints of the dissidents, but in his report he stated that matters were far worse and that Mr Pahadia believed in one man rule in the state and ignored the other members in all matters of the state, which has resulted in complete lack of cohesion among party members.

After the 28 March incident, Mr Pahadia's supporters have dwindled significantly. In a signature campaign launched before the election of the deputy speaker, out of 140 members of the Congress(I), it was claimed that 60 members had signed the memorandum commending Mr Pahadia's performance. Soon after the election, a meeting of Mr Pahadia's supporters was called by the minister of state for public relations at Mr Pahadia's residence, but only 40 of the 140 members attended the meeting, which in itself indicates a very bleak future for the CM.

Milap Chand Dandia

CRICKET

The shape of the future

West Indies: Clive Lloyd and his demolition squad (otherwise known as the West Indies cricket team), may have brushed aside the memory of the missing second Test with England and gone on to once again thrash the team from the 'Mother Country' but it is difficult to see either the West Indies team or international cricket surviving too many Jackman affairs. The predictable outburst against the English bowler who plays in South Africa (where his wife comes from) has created strains not merely on West Indies-England relations, but also problems within the West Indies too.

The West Indies is no longer one political federation, as it was 20 years ago; today it consists of independent nations who only get together under one banner when they play cricket. This cricket federation could come apart within the coming decade, and the various nations might send out their separate cricket teams. Of the West Indian nations, Barbados is one which could easily field an independent team good enough to compete with anyone in the regular Test match cycle. The cricketing authorities could be then forced to rationalise the manner in which the game is played at the international level, and we might have a two-league system, with Australia, India, England, Pakistan and Barbados in the first division, and New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica and Zimbabwe in the second division. There might even be a third division with Bangladesh, Canada, Fiji and Holland. Doubtless there could be promotions and demotions.

Meanwhile, off the cricket field the touring English players are trying hard to make a joke of the terrifying pace bowling which has destroyed them in the game, as well as psychologically. Their current party game has the two batsmen facing the bowlers pretending to sit in wheelchairs. The batsmen display their fright at the prospect of facing Roberts, Holding, Croft and Garner in awesome succession by handing the umpire a roll of toilet paper; after each ball the batsman interrupts the game to take a few sheets of TP from the umpire.

MADHYA PRADESH

Journalists, beware!

Bhopal: Mr S.R. Gupta, the collector of Chhatarpur does not like journalists. Ever since Mr Sheo Anurag Pateria a journalist of *Shubh Bharat* leaked the report of a magisterial probe into the rape of a girl by a policeman. This angered the district administration because it had been planning to exonerate the errant sub-inspector.

The confrontation between the press and the district administration started on 26 July 1980. Suresh Soni was staying with his sister Krishna Kumari Soni in Gupta Lodge, a hotel in Chhatarpur. An assistant sub-inspector of police went to the hotel and summoned Suresh Soni to the counter of the hotel. While Mr Soni was at the counter of the hotel, the policeman entered Mr Soni's room and raped his sister. The incident led to a public agitation and the police fired on the crowd which had gathered for the demonstration. The magistrate who probed the incident censored the district administration for the firing and held the policeman guilty of rape.

Sheo Anurag Pateria

Mr Pateria through his own sources found out about the magisterial probe which the district administration was trying to hush up. *Shubh Bharat*, a local daily, published the report in three instalments ignoring the intimidation of the administration to discontinue its publication.

The collector then asked the superintendent of police, Mr Alind Jain, to find out ways and means to teach Mr Pateria a lesson. In fact, the collector was brazen enough to ask the SP in the presence of local pressmen: "Have you prepared the papers for the arrest of Sheo Anurag Pateria and Agarwal?" (Shyam Agarwal is the president of the Chhatarpur district journalists union and is also the editor of *Shubh Bharat.)* The collector went to the extent of threatening Mr Agarwal with the cancellation of the daily's declaration if the editor did not tell him Mr Pateria's source. But the editor did not bend down to the demands.

The incident soon became the talk of the town. On 3 February some student leaders and local leaders boycotted schools and a Chhatarpur *bandh* was announced on 5 February. Matters reached a climax on 24 February when the three dailies of the town announced on their front pages that they would fight the repression of the district administration.

Later the Chhatarpur journalists went to the chief minister on 30 March to seek his protection. Even an announcement on the floor of the Vidhan Sabha by Mr Arjun Singh to set up a judicial probe into the firing has not pacified the journalists for they feel that the collector of a small town is more powerful than the chief minister of a state.

M.V. Kher

FILM INDUSTRY

UAE bans films on grounds of obscenity

A still from Satyam Shivam Sundaram

Bombay: One thousand Hindi films have been banned by the UAE government. Among them are *Bobby*, *Sholay*, *Muqaddar ka Sikander*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* and *Abdullah*. American and English films have come under the purview of the ban too. Some of the well known films banned being, *My Fair Lady*, *Born Free*, *Love Story*, *Casino Royale* and *Avanti*.

The ban is viewed as the first step taken by the UAE government to crack down on films that project anti-Islamic sentiments. There are other reasons of course, one of them being obscenity. For instance, *Gupta Gyan* and *Kama Sutra* have been banned for reasons of obscenity; *Bobby*, because it deals with youngsters rebelling because of love, and *Amar Akbar Anthony* and *Abdullah* because the films portrayed Hindus and Muslims adopting each others religions.

The sudden decision of the UAE government has left the Indian film industry in a daze. "I can't believe it," said Prakash Mehra, whose *Muqaddar ka Sikander* was banned on grounds of obscenity. "There is nothing vulgar in my movie. If my movie is considered obscene, then a lot of other films would not be able to pass muster."

Said Mr B. K. Karanjia, editor of *Screen*, "I think the Dubai government's action is very severe. I feel the grounds on which the Indian films are being banned are rather flimsy. I have seen most of these movies and never found anything objectionable in them. I hope this ban is a passing phase. I don't think this is a permanent thing."

But film producers alone will not suffer financial losses because of the ban. The ban is going to affect the export of video cassettes of Indian films. Currently, India produces 600 cassettes per day and each cassette costs about Rs 250.

But not everybody in the film industry will agree with Mr Anand. Some fear that if the Dubai government—which is comparatively liberal in its outlook—implements the ban, then the more conservative governments of Saudi Arabia, Libya and Pakistan would follow suit causing staggering losses for the film industry. Consequently, in a last moment bid to prevent the ban noted film stars like Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor, Ranjeeta and Amjad Khan are visiting the Gulf countries to persuade the big shots in Dubai not to impose the ban. The All India Film Producers Council (AIFPC) held an urgent meeting soon after the announcement of the ban and have decided to send a deputation headed by Amjad Khan to take up the matter with the UAE government.

Haresh Munwani

INDIANS ABROAD

Former headmistress enters US politics

New Jersey: The 53-year-old history teacher and former headmistress of Sanatan Balika Vidyatan, has decided to enter American politics. This is the second time that an Indian immigrant has entered the US political arena. The first time was in 1956, when Dalip Singh Saund had stormed into the US Congress. Ms Dutta announced her candidature to a New Jersey Assembly seat on 24 February on a ticket of the Democratic party. The fact that she teams up with a Somerville attorney, Thomas Dilt in a bid to unseat Republicans Walter Kavanaugh and Elliot Smith, in a traditional Republican bastion at a time when Ronald Reagan is riding high, speaks for Ms Dutta's enthusiasm in politics. The election will be held in November and Ms Dutta's candidature will not be official till June, when the Democratic primary will be held. For Ms Dutta, however, this will be a mere formality since there are no other candidates in the run. What caused this Indian immigrant to enter US politics? In an exclusive interview with SUNDAY Ms Dutta said, "The time has come for someone from my country to step forward and be an integral part of the system." She hoped that her candidature will serve to project the image of India in the country. Indeed, for Ms Dutta, who had unsuccessfully contested the West Bengal State Assembly elections in 1951, entering US politics is only a step forward from peripheral involvement to active participation. Ever since she took up US citizenship in 1979, she has been deeply involved with the Democratic party. In 1972, she worked on George McGovern's run for presidency against Richard Nixon. In 1976, she was active in Jimmy Carter's triumph and again in his defeat in 1980.

And the reactions? Response has been widespread. Ms Dutta claims that she has received congratulatory messages both from Americans and Indian immigrants. "I have been accepted whereever I have gone... Even in the presidential and senatorial race I did not find anyone questioning my right to be where I was." In fact, Ms Dutta has succeeded in having a formidable list of supporters among whom are Brendan Byrne, the New Jersey governor and Senator Bill Bradley.

Kanak Dutta

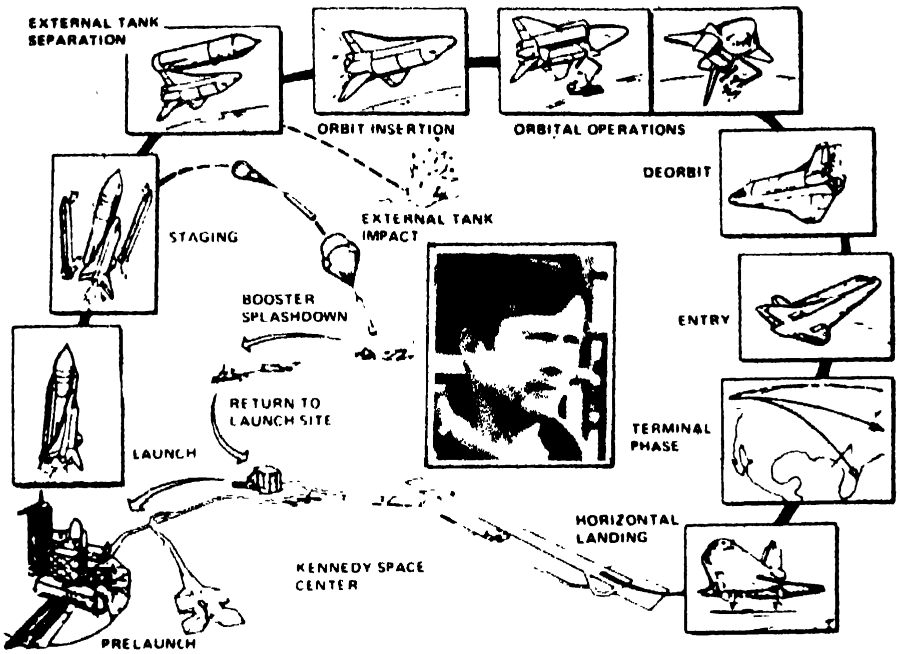
But, it is not merely the American citizens and the Indian immigrants who have responded positively to Ms Dutta's entry into politics. Within the Democratic party there is complete unanimity and goodwill. But with all that, it will not be before November, when it will be decided if Ms Dutta has more luck in the political scene of her adopted country than she had in the country of her birth.

Achal Mehra

SPACE SHUTTLE

History from takeoff to touchdown

Cape Canaveral: "... four, three, two, one, zero!" The rumblings reached a defeaning crescendo. The flames burst forth like a nuclear explosion. The giant shuttle system zoomed up amidst cheers, awe, apprehension and wonder. Columbia, the 107-ton first US Space Shuttle was launched. The date: 12 April 1981, exactly two decades since Russian Yuri Gagarin's historic flight into space. The time: 17.30 (IST). Inside were astronauts John Young (50), commander and Robert Crippen



A diagram showing the Space Shuttle's flight from countdown to touchdown (Inset) John Young

Eight-and-a-half-minutes after takeoff: Columbia reached a height of 118 kms and a speed of 26,700 kmph. On the ninth minute the giant fuel tank was separated from the shuttle and sped back to earth. It burnt up as it entered the earth's atmosphere, the only component of the system that was disposable. 192 kms offshore, two ships retrieved the rocket boosters that were separated next from the shuttle system. These are to be used again, in the next shuttle programme.

Then began the 54-hour flight during which the shuttle orbited the earth 36 times. And even as the 75-ton shuttle hurtled through space, commander Young carried on a series of manoeuveres: turning the craft through 360 degrees, raising and lowering the nose and adopting all possible positions—all in preparation for the touchdown scheduled for 14 April 1981.

14 April, Edwards Air Force Base, California. A tense crowd and control room crew awaited the return of Columbia. The landing had to be perfect the very first time. There would be no second chance. As a spokesman of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration put it, "Unlike the DC-9 airliner it resembles, the shuttle has no power to zoom up and try for a second landing, if it is not on target."

Columbia entered the earth's atmosphere. Temperatures rose to 2,700 degrees F as the shuttle passed north of Australia, two engines burst, breaking orbital speed of 277 kmph. But ionization had occured. The shuttle was enveloped by gases and all communication broken with ground control. The wait seemed everlasting. Finally, at 11.06 pm (IST), the vehicle emerged from the blackout. At 21.53 (IST), like a giant glider, the space shuttle touched down on the dry lake bed of the Mojave desert, only nine seconds behind schedule.

What was behind the successful flight and touchdown of Columbia? Apart from the years of research and the massive efforts of the space scientists, who worked for ten years on the heat-resisting tiles alone, credit goes to the five computers that controlled the whole operation from within the shuttle. Each valve was tested 50 times every second to make sure that all went well. Indeed, it was a last moment quirk in one of the computers that caused the launcing to be postponed by one day.

The massive efforts finally paid off when Columbia was born. The hybrid rocket-airplane was not just the next evolutionary step in development after the rockets that went to the moon and back. Columbia is a transportation system that has a four-fold function: at launch, like a smooth aero-dynamic projectile; in space, like a spacecraft; at re-entry, like a blunt, bell-shaped capsule of the past; and in the earth's atmosphere as a supersonic glider. What is more, this was the first time that a completely reusable system had been evolved.

Now that the first flight has been a success, the operational phase is going to start right away. Through an agreement signed on 18 July 1978, India is going to be the first paying customer to use the shuttle as a launch vehicle for its INSAT-1. More than 75 future flights of the shuttle has already been booked. A new era in space research has begun. Perhaps even more significant than the flight of the first sputnik, the space shuttle will have positive contributions to make, in fields of electronics, pharmaceuticals, and meteorology.

A worldly degree, indeed!

Madras: In January this year, many Tamil dailies front-paged a news item: an American university had honoured MGR with a doctorate. The name of the university was the World University. But few had even heard of it. And some of those who had not heard of it decided to find out about it. One such person was T. P. Radhakrishnan, a lawyer staying in Madras. He wrote to the World University and said that his brother P. Jayram, an executive in the Reserve Bank of India, was interested in obtaining a doctorate. Could he please have one? The reply from the headquarters of the university at Tuscon, Arizona, was prompt. It said that Mr Radhakrishnan's brother could indeed have a doctorate from the university, but could he specify if he wanted the doctorate in literature or finance? It also asked Mr Radhakrishnan to contact Dr K. Srinivasan, the World University representative in India. Dr Srinivasan is a resident of Madras and a poet (he claims that he has been nominated for the Nobel prize by poet laureates from 50 different countries) and it is only on his recommendation that degrees are awarded to Indians. The letter also mentioned that the fee for getting the degree would be 100 dollars.

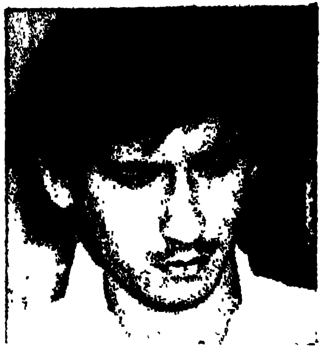
Founded about 33 years ago by Howard Zitko, the World University is one of about 750 universities in the USA which award degrees and doctorates without the candidate either pursuing a course or appearing for an examination The institute operates in a three room flat with just a desk, a typist, a postbox and some printed notes. It awards a masters degree on payment of 250 dollars.

The World University, however, justifies this as "freedom of education." A note from its international headquarters to its representative in India says: "Apparently, in India, many are unacquainted with the freedom with which university educational institutions are permitted in the USA. Many accredited universities have no campus at all. Some operate on tutorial basis only, and some are basically correspondence schools with degree-granting rights." And the World University, it appears, is exercising these rights to the utmost.

The chief minister of Tamil Nadu is perhaps the first important Indian, though by no means the first, to have received a degree from the World University. In Tamil Nadu itself, there are at least five other persons—an astrologer, a flautist, a lecturer, a playback singer and a small-time poet—who were all honoured in a similar manner. Tamil Nadu CM MGR has even been invited to address the conference of the university to be held in San Francisco in July. Though MGR has not decided whether to attend the conference or not.

THE WORLD

"Dr Salauddin's" terrorist centre


Shahnawaz Bhutto

Murtuza Bhutto's codename is "Dr Salauddin;" he lives with younger brother Shahnawaz (codenamed "Nabil") in a sprawling house opposite the West German embassy in Kabul. "Dr Salauddin" is the nominal head of an elaborate terrorist training centre located in Kabul's Karte Char district and run by Russian, Cuban and Libyan military personnel. Pro-Bhutto terrorists who receive training at "Dr Salauddin's centre" are recruited in Pakistan and, through a vast, well-organised underground network, are eventually smuggled across the border. According to sources in Kabul, hundreds of young Pakistanis have so far arrived at the terrorist centre and more are on their way.

Murtuza Bhutto

The first contingent of insurgents is likely to return to Pakistan sometime this summer.

Pope in dispute

Pope John Paul II was recently confronted with an unprecedented problem: the demand of Vatican City's trade union for more pay for less work. It was an industrial dispute of sorts with the 1,500 "civilian" workers of the Vatican being represented by 39 union leaders. The Pope held a historic meeting with the union leaders (it was described by the Vatican's official daily bulletin as an "audience with the association of lay Vatican dependants"). The dispute was eventually resolved with the Pope conceding the demand that the 39-hour working week be lowered to 36 hours "as soon as possible;" increase in family allowances; privileged treatment for employees' children if they seek employment at the Vatican; and grants for those employees whose children are engaged in studies at the university level.

Pope John Paul II

Greene's Soviet links

Graham Greene

Former British intelligence officer and now celebrated novelist Graham Greene recently admitted his links with Kim Philby, the British spy who defected to Moscow. Mr Greene claimed that Kim Philby was his superior in the British secret service and added, "We were friends I knew he was leftwing. But I did not know that he was a communist." He also disclosed that he was in possession of Philby's letters written from the USSR, but ruled out the possibility of their publication. Some of the letters contained information about Soviet interests in Afghanistan but that, Mr Greene claimed, was "an attempt at disinformation on the orders of the KGB."

Labour pains

Pakistan's Major General Shahid Hamid, once private secretary to Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck and more recently minister for culture and tourism under General Zia, is going to publish his memoirs soon in which he will claim that Lord Mountbatten could have halted the partition massacres if he had wanted to—but refused to do so. And why did he refuse? Because the Labour government did not allow him to use British troops to prevent the bloodshed. Auchinleck had nearly 30,000 British troops but though he wanted to send them to troubled areas to restore peace, he was not allowed to. Possibly, the Labour government in London thought that the use of British troops would be embarrassing to India and Pakistan.

Korchnoi mates Russians

Chess grandmaster Viktor Korchnoi defected from the USSR five years ago. And since then, the Soviet government has denied him the pleasure of matching his wits against Russian grandmasters in tournaments outside the official world championship series. In 1979 the Russians went to the extent of ordering their players to quit the prestigious international chess tournament at Lone Pine in California just because Korchnoi had also decided to participate. So this year Korchnoi played it safe: a week before the Lone Pine tournament he was touring China. Soviet representatives Romanishin and Yusopov sent an urgent message from Lone Pine to Moscow seeking the green signal to participate in the tournament. Unware of Korchnoi's ploy, Moscow complied. The exiled grandmaster made a last-minute appearance, arriving at Lone Pine after midnight in a Greyhound bus. He had not even booked a hotel room and spent the night with another participant. The next morning he announced his participation in the tournament.

Viktor Korchnoi

Briefly

Cost of war

The war with Iraq has cost Iran more than £7,113 million in just the past six months; disclosing this at a recent rally in Tehran, Iranian minister for executive affairs Behzad Nabavi admitted that revenue losses accounted for £5,928 and that the war raised government expenses by £1,185. Iran's port capacity has been reduced by 50 per cent: Khorramshahr, the country's largest port, has been destroyed completely and Bandar Khomeini and Bushehr are out of commission because they happen to be located in the war zone.

Rightwing Germans

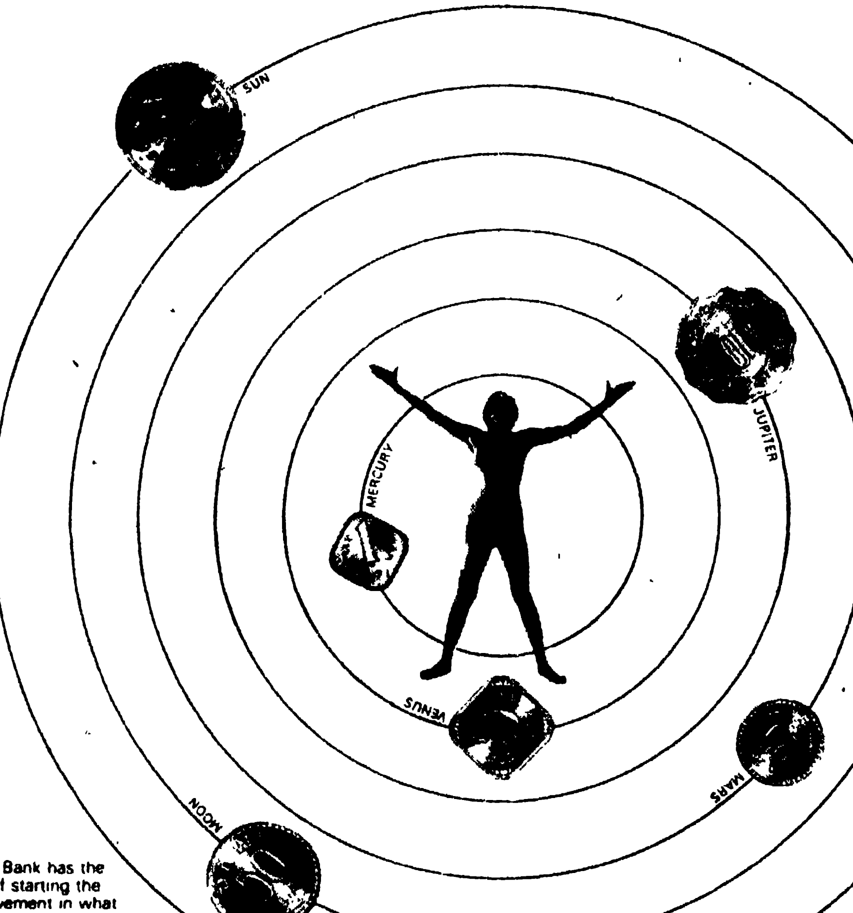
A recent poll by a respected West German institute shows that 13 per cent of the electorate believe in national socialism—in other words, the philosophy of Hitler. They hate minorities and democracy, and consider Aryans to be a superior race.

Clown quits

Clouche the clown (*World*, 5 March) has announced the end of his novel campaign for the French presidency; he will support Mr Giscard d'Estaing's socialist rival, Francois Mitterrand.

Corporation Bank completes 75 years and announces a new theory of the universe to mark the occasion.

The theory is simply this: that man is the centre of the universe.



Corporation Bank has the distinction of starting the banking movement in what has now come to be known as the cradle of Indian Banking – South Kanara district – in the year 1906

But it was really in the '70s that Corporation Bank achieved spectacular success Within a matter of twelve years, between 1969 and 1980, the bank's deposits went up fourteen fold, from Rs 21 crores to over Rs 300 crores Total advances shot up from Rs 14 crores to Rs 160 crores and the number of branches rose from 78 to 323 within the same period

Despite its 75 years, there's really a terrific young spirit at work in Corporation Bank That's because as a nationalized bank, it's just 11 months old Nationalization has given a new sense of direction and dynamism to the people at the bank

From a south-based bank, Corporation Bank is fast becoming a truly national bank by spreading its network of branches all over the country and involving itself in the economic life of every state

Well, what more can a good, hardworking bank want? Plenty more, if you happen to belong to Corporation Bank If there's one thing Corporation Bank has learnt over the years, it's that the subject, object and predicate of banking is man It is not enough that men survive They must have a chance to work, to eat three square meals and to live with dignity and self respect

Words, words, words? No Corporation Bank is putting into action an absolutely novel idea to reach out and change the lives of people living below the poverty line It's an idea that could work, really work small miracles among millions of families across the country

What it needs is just a little help from you You don't have to spend a paisa All you have to do is put in a word for deserving people and Corporation Bank will put up the money to help them stand on their own feet

And what is the definition of deserving people? Well, in this context, people who know a trade or have skills (anything from tailoring, shoe-making to growing fruits and vegetables) and whose family income is less than Rs 3000 a year if they live in cities and less than Rs 2000 if they live in villages. Once the application is processed and approved, the bank will lend an individual or family anywhere between Rs.1,500 to Rs 6,500 at just 4% interest.

How about it? Will you become a high-powered consultant to Corporation Bank? When will you come over to the nearest branch of Corporation Bank with the names and bio-datas of people you want to recommend? Or better still with the people themselves? The faster, the better Remember, the livelihood and future of a whole lot of families depends on you

Corporation Bank

(Wholly owned by the Government of India)
Head Office Mangalore

1906 1981

puts man where he belongs: at the centre of the universe

PRATIBHA-CB-103/81

GOOD NEWS

Aid for the handicapped

The central government has launched a new scheme to assist physically handicapped people in procuring durable and sophisticated aids. However, only those aids which do not cost less than Rs 25 and more than Rs 1,500 are covered by the scheme. The government will bear the entire expense of aids costing up to Rs 750 and 50 per cent of the cost of those between Rs 751 and Rs 1,500. Not just this, the expense incurred by a disabled person coming from an outstation to an implementing agency will be met. In case he is not in a position to travel alone, the expenses of the person accompanying him will also be taken care of.

This scheme, being implemented through centres run by companies registered under the Companies Act, registered societies or any other institution recognised by the ministry of social welfare, will provide assistance to all disabled persons who are employed, semi-employed or getting pension but with incomes not exceeding Rs 1,500 per month.

DEVI PRASAD SINHA

Gujarat in luck

Impressed by the favourable investment climate in Gujarat, the Zappia group of companies from the United Arab Emirates is to set up two major joint ventures in the state. Mr Joseph Zappia, chief of the Dubai-based group, and Mr Mahendra Patel, a UAE industrialist, announced their decision to start a Rs 87-crore sponge iron plant, possibly in Surat. They also plan to set up a Rs 70-crore cement plant, also in Gujarat. For the sponge iron plant, the UAE giants shall plough in equity to the tune of Rs 25 crores, according to H. K. Khan, chairman of Gujarat Industrial Investment Corporation (GIIC), the project's Indian partner. Mr Joseph Zappia is a Canadian by birth, who, incidentally, fought against Pierre Trudeau for the Canadian premiership years ago

More jobs under Sixth Plan

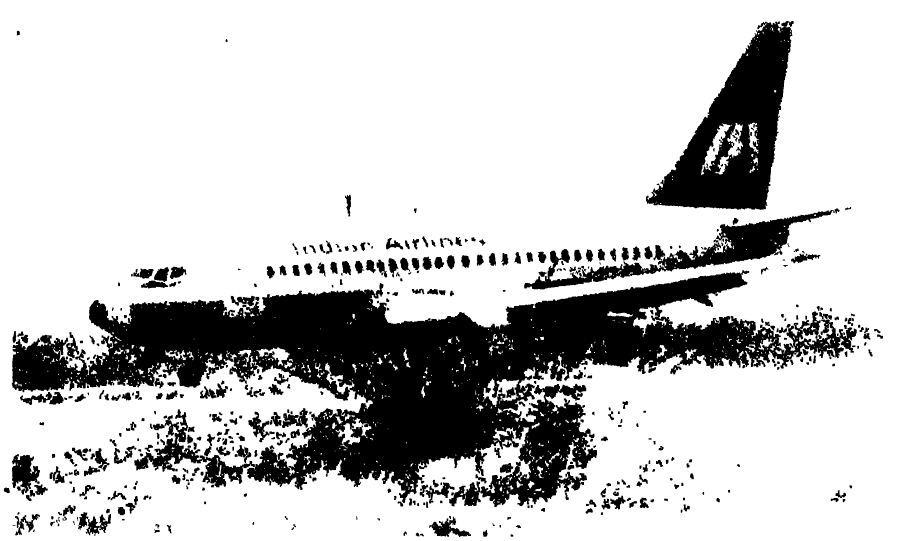
Some cheer for the jobless. According to M. S. Swaminathan, member, planning commission, the Sixth Five Year Plan is to create 34 million additional jobs as a result of a hopefully well organised operation. Every district is to have its own manpower planning and employment generation council to study and suggest ways to solve unemployment. Since hill areas are the most disadvantaged in respect of jobs, special care shall be taken to develop them.

Plenty of water

The world's largest water development project, the National Water Development Agency, has been formally launched with the Public Investment Board (PIB) clearing a sum of Rs 170 crores for the project. The aim is to construct about 150 million acre feet of storages and link the river basins of the country. The agency has been registered as a society so that it has **enough freedom to recruit its staff from the best available expertise in the country. The idea is to conserve monsoon flood waters which otherwise run into the sea. It is estimated that of the total surface water of 1,440 million acre feet available in the country, only 220 million acre feet are used. It was to maximise the use of the available surface water that it was set up**

Fly high for lower fares

Indian Airlines will offer a 30 per cent discount on fares on domestic flights for organised package tours and for families travelling on leave travel concession (LTC). Under the scheme, valid for a period of one year from 1 April 1981 to 31 March 1982, Indian and foreign nationals employed in India who are entitled to LTC can avail of the 30 per cent discount on normal adult fares. The minimum size of the family must be four members, out of which two should be adults. Parents will also be eligible. The concession will be available for specified trips, provided the family travels together at the commencement of the journey. For the package tour whose minimum duration is to be four days, the group should consist of a minimum of eight full-fare-paying passengers, or a minimum of 32 passengers. The concession will not be available to passenger availing of any other concession.



Surgical success

For the first time in India a severed palm and a severed thumb were successfully reimplanted at the Stanley Medical College, Madras, according to Dr R. Venkataswamy, professor and head of the department of plastic surgery. The doctors who performed the surgery say that patients have a very good chance of regaining full use of the severed part if the operation is performed within an hour of the accident. The amputated part should be immediately sterilised and put in an ice-cooled plastic container without the ice coming into actual contact with the severed part.

KHAAS BAAT

Padmini Kohlapure's risky venture of planting a kiss on Prince Charles's cheek is still paying her dividends. Recently, a group of fans from Africa were passing the starlet's house when they were asked to ook up at her apartment, although she was nowhere o be seen. "Oh, the *chhokri* who kissed Prince Charles!" was how she was identified by one member of the group. The *chhokri*, incidenally, has gone a long way: starring as a 13-year-old, in *Gehrayee* which is doing good business in Bombay. And there is more: she appears in a full back nude n one of the scenes. Surely, baby Pads is going to be earmarked for posterity for his scene.

Reena Roy: all set to play he second fiddle

DHIREN DA

DURGAPRASAD

Padmini Kohlapure: the kiss that sent sparks flying

The latest stories of temper tantrums are those of *Deepti Naval*. After the release of her book of peoms, *Lamha Lamha*, she seems to have become an intellectual: she invited a host of intellectuals to a party to criticise her work. This perhaps explains her high-and-mighty attitude towards the not-so-intellectual. Besides, Deepti never misses a chance to be at her worst, especially on the sets when there is another girl around, be it *Moushumi*, *Zarina* or anybody else. Perhaps, the cause lies in *Gulzar*, who has this strange capacity to attract women who are beautiful and also very deft at throwing temper tantrums.

SHYAM AURANGABADKAR

Zeenat Aman

DURGAPRASAD

Shatru: husband in love?

Even as *Poonam—Shatru's* wife—lies pregnant to the teeth (the baby is due to arrive in June), Shatru is carrying on, heedless, with *Reena Roy*, on and off the sets. He definitely looks like a very-much-in-love bachelor. Fear is being expressed in some quarters that the two are planning on a *Dharam-Hema* type of marriage. They might have a reason: both are looking almost as fat and pregnant as wife Poonam. It could be a case of sympathetic malady, or maybe, it is a genuine case of pregnancy, again! Only it doesn't explain Shatru's obesity.

So finally we know why *Zeenat* has been putting on those wads of fat. She has given up smoking: which is indeed a feat, considering that she drove her mother to the point of desperation with her endless smoking. Whatever may have caused Zeenat to take the decision, the outcome is not exactly appealing. Zeenat's appetite has increased incredibly—the cigarette and coffee diet is hardly satisfying her and it is beginning to show. Poor Zeenat, she cut down with an eye on her health and now no one can miss it!

What has come over *Amitabh Bachchan*? Nowadays he seems to have dropped his high-and mighty air and is going out of his way to be pleasant to lesser folks and is even being civil to journalists. One wonders whether this recent stroke of bad luck—string of flops—has anything to do with this change. Perhaps he is hoping that a change in his attitude will help bring about a change of luck.

KHAAS BAAT

Remember director' *Barathiraaja's* first film · *16 Vaiyathinele?* Well, there was a sequence where the lip-synchronisation was faulty but went unnoticed in the final copy. Well the film was a runaway hit and since then every film of Barathiraaja has at least one faulty deliberate lip-synch, lest the good luck vanish.

Jayalalitha is becoming a novelist. Two of her recent stories serialised in two popular Tamil weeklies received wide acclaim. She is currently working on a novel which has autobiographical overtones. And if that is not enough, she is said to be taking over a weekly called *Awasthi* which had a short existence last year before vanishing from the scene.

Smita Patil: stealing the limelight in the south

Rajni Sharma in Megathirkum Thangamundu

Suhasini is still licking her wounds after losing the prestigious Rajkamal award by just one vote to none other than *Smita Patil*, for her performance in *Chakra*. As for Smita, she was thoroughly surprised, especially since she did not think too much about the way the film was shaping up.

"I am not in the stock market where people can buy or sell me." That is *Pratap Pothen* for you. From the very beginning of his career, the actor had been rather careful in signing up for films. And now, after the three successful films in a row, he has really become choosy, in every sense of the term.

Sudeshna in a Aparna

The vitamin pills that caused *Deepa's* bustline to grow so much that it became the talk of the town, has affected her nerves. Deepa wants to quit, and get married, but not to anyone who has even the remotest connection with the film industry. But mother, (who thought Deepa was 'so-b-i-g') has other plans. She wants Deepa to do a few more films. Perhaps the lady plans to launch her son's career with Deepa's savings, hence all the talk about work.

Rathi Devi is going all out to do a film with *Pratap Pothen* in it. Reason: a couple of heroines who starred with Pratap bared a great deal, but without much grace. Rathi Devi, who is confident of her capabilities, is sure she can do a much better job, so far as exposing herself is concerned. There is just one snag: will Pratap be willing to work in soft porn movies like *Thakara* anymore?

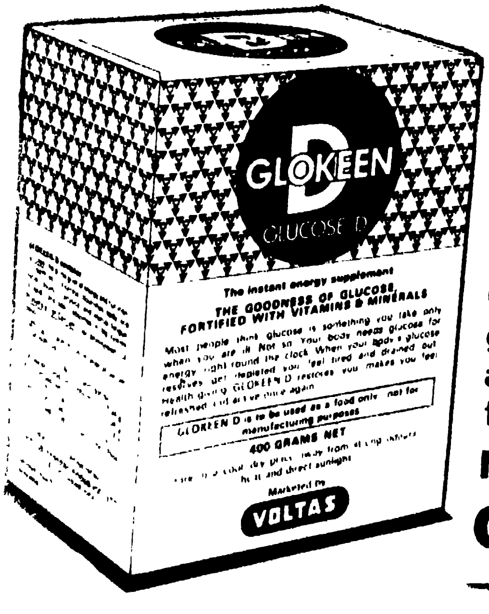
Pratap Pothen: no soft porn

Smita Patil has stolen the limelight in *Dil a Nadan*, the remake of *Sridhar's* Tamil hit *Ilamai Oonjaladikirathu*. *Jayapradha*, who is the heroine, has lost the show especially in view of the sexy scenes featuring Smita. The scenes came as a shock to those who had just seen *Chakra*. Well thats Smita, and shall we say, versatility for you.

The other day, *Nenjatthai Killathe* girl, *Suhasini* was shooting in the vicinity of a men's college in Madras. The film unit was heckled and Suhasini was singled out for snide remarks. But the actress remained cool. When things started getting out of hand, the director duo *Robert* and *Rajasekar*, approached the student union president, introduced the office bearers to the cast and then like magic everything cooled off.

PIOUSJI

Glokeen-D Energy...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Fast-acting Glokeen-D is an invigorating energy supplement for everyone. It fights fatigue and provides more stamina. Glokeen-D contains all the goodness of glucose, fortified with calcium, phosphates and vitamin D... to keep you in peak fitness all the time.

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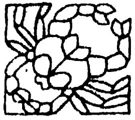
ULKA-GD-1

Beginning 3 May
This week the Sun and Mars are in Aries, Mercury and Venus are in Taurus, Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto are in Virgo and Rahu is in Cancer. The Moon will be moving through Taurus, Gemini and Cancer from Aries.

ARIES (15 April—14 May) This week is particularly favourable for matters related to property and insurance. You may also benefit otherwise through a secret source or information. Your domestic front will be happy and the source of inspiration. Professional affairs will demand time and attention. Friends will cause anxiety. You are advised to exercise tact in both written and spoken word and to take care of your health. **Good dates:** 4, 5 and 8. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.

TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This week demands excellent public relations on your part. If you proceed carefully on your professional front, luck is bound to favour you. Friends and relatives will prove extremely helpful. The time is particularly favourable for artistic and literary pursuits. Love and matrimonial matters are not well signified. You are advised to avoid disputes and controversies. Be on your guard against deceit. **Good dates:** 3, 5 and 7. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North-east.

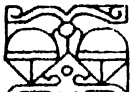
GEMINI (15 June— 14 July) Personal problems will continue to worry you this week. The time is not favourable for love and matrimonial affairs; nor is it favourable for gambling and speculative ventures. Your efforts may not bear fruit this week. Letters will not bring good tidings either. You will come under harsh criticism. Neither friends nor relatives will prove particularly helpful to you. You are advised to make fresh plans for the future. **Good dates:** 3, 4 and 6. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South.



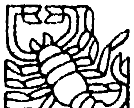
CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week may prove very unlucky for you. The time is not favourable for entering into new business or professional contracts. Financially you will not be happy and may have to go in for fresh loans. However, love and matrimonial affairs are well signified. Your domestic front will be calm. Those born around sunset may fall critically ill this week. You are advised to conserve your energies. **Good dates:** 4, 7 and 9. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.

LEO (15 August—14 September) Your financial problems will be solved this week, thanks by and large to your own initiative and gumption. Other problems, if not solved, will cease to bother you. Help from elders and secret sources will be forthcoming. Matters related to the heart should make steady progress. However, on your domestic front you may have to face a serious challenge. You are advised to be firm and resolute. **Good dates:** 4, 5 and 9. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** South-west.

VIRGO (15 September—14 October) New developments on your professional front will demand much more of your time and energies this week. However, success will not come your way this week. Financially the time is not favourable either. You may have to resort to short-term measures to overcome some of your pressing problems. Your domestic front will not be free from troubles. An elderly relative will cause anxiety.**Good dates:** 3, 6 and 9. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.



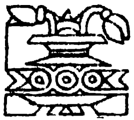
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This may be a disappointing week for you in more than one way. A few very minor problems may cause havoc; unreasonable opposition from both subordinates and those in authority will undermine your efforts. You may be called upon to shoulder added responsibilities. Your family members will prove very demanding. However, you may gain through the good offices of a member of the opposite sex. Check extravagance. **Good dates:** 3, 4 and 6. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 7. **Favourable direction** : South.



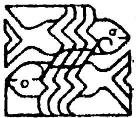
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A happy week with hectic activity on all fronts is in store for you. The time is particularly favourable for making desirable changes and seeking favours from influential people. You can also afford to take reasonable risks after consulting elders or those in authority. You may benefit through a secret source or association, legal suits or property matters. You are advised to seek and act upon the advice of elders. **Good dates:** 4, 8 and 9. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.

SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) A new friendship is in store for you this week. However, there are indications of severe reversals on your professional front. You will be forced to conserve your resources this week. The time is not favourable for love and matrimonial affairs. You may have to postpone the journey which you had planned earlier. A letter from a distant friend or relative will bring good tidings. **Good dates:** 3, 8 and 9. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.

CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Success on your financial front is signified this week. Secret sources will contribute to your happiness and prosperity. Your intellectual and artistic pursuits are not likely to make much headway this week. A female relative will oppose you at home and cause anxiety as a result. You might have to undertake a short journey which may be the answer to one of your pressing problems. **Good dates:** 4, 7 and 8. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North-west.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) You will have to face plenty of opposition (particularly from a member of the opposite sex) this week. Professional associates will annoy you to no end. Minor financial losses are also in store for you. An unexpected unheaval on your domestic front will leave you particularly unhappy. However, matters related to the heart will make good progress with your partner contributing to your happiness. Check your temper. **Good dates:** 5, 7 and 9. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 5 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) You are likely to face serious competition on your professional front this week. Your personal life will not be free from trouble either. Delays and obstacles will cause you untold misery. On the whole, this is not a very favourable week for you. You are best advised to lie low, build up your contacts and grab any opportunity that comes your way. Look after your health. **Good dates:** 3, 6 and 8. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 6. **Favourable direction:** East.

The year 1981 for West Bengal CM Jyoti Basu: The period between 16 April and 30 June is not favourable for the CPI(M) leader and his government in West Bengal. Mr Basu, in all probability, will be ousted from power this year. If his government survives the initial period of bad luck, the months of October and November should prove crucial. However, if Mr Basu survives through 1981, by 1982 he should emerge as an important factor in national politics.

AMRITLAL

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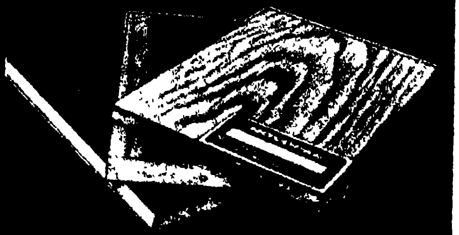

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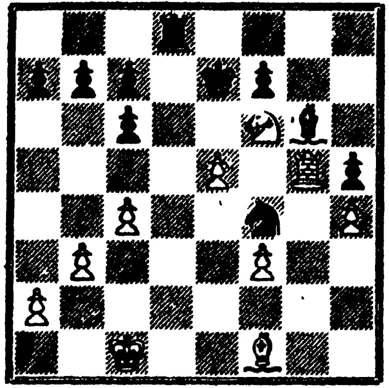
chess

Timman (Black)



Polugeevsky (White)

Position after Black's 24th move

Game of the Month – unhappy ending

Take comfort. Even at the highest levels players sometimes make a hash of the ending. It may come as a surprise that simple-looking positions can hold out sufficient possibilities for one player to outplay another, especially when the players concerned are among the best in the world. For proof of this one only has to look back to Baguio, when of all the remarkable things that happened, most of them occurred in endgames.

As an illustration of how an 'unloseable' ending can crumble around the ears of one of the world's leading grandmasters in the space of just a dozen moves, I give the following game from Bugojno. Timman's handling of the black pieces is exemplary. Not how crucial the factor of piece activity is when the pawn structure is theoretically speaking very much against him

White: Polugaevsky Black: Timman
Irregular Defence

1. P—QB4, P—KN3; 2. P—K4, P—K4; A Hungarian speciality designed to avoid the main lines of the Kings Indian Defence.

3. P—Q4, N—KB3; 4. N—KB3, P x P; 5. P—K5, B—N5+; 6. B—Q2, Q—K2; 7. B x B, Q x B+; 8. Q—Q2, Q x Q+; 9. QN x Q, N—R4; 10. N x P, N—QB3; 11. N x N, QP x N; 12. O—O—O Superficially White's chances in this ending are better because of the doubled QBPs which cripple Black's queenside majority. In reality, however, Black's position is more compact and White's advanced pawns on K5 and QB4 can easily cause his position to become overextended.

12. . . ., B—B4; 13. P—B3, N—N2; 14. P—KN4?! Beginning the process of over-extension

14. . . ., B—K3; 15. N—K4, P—KR4! 16. P—KR4, K—K2; 17. B—K2, QR—Q1; 18. R x R, R x R; 19. N—B6? Down the path to nowhere, but even after the humble 19. R—Q1, R—KR1! White has problems.

19. . . ., B—B1! Vacating the square for the knight, which is bound for B5.

20. P—N3 An admission of total bankruptcy, but White has no obvious way to cover his multiple weaknesses.

20. . . ., N—K3; 21. P x P, N—B5; 22. B—B1, P x P; 23. R—N1, B—B4; 24. R—N6, B—N3;

DIAGRAM

Compare this position with the one twelve moves ago. White is totally lost. The bishop has no move, the rook has gone down a one-way dead end. The king cannot move without allowing . . ., R—Q8 winning the bishop!

25. N—K4, R—Q5; 26. N—N3, N—K3; 27. N—B5+ Else the rook is trapped.

27. . . ., B x N; 28. R x B, R x RP; 29. K—Q2, R—R7+; 30. K—K3, R x P; 31. R x RP, R—N7; Winning a second pawn. White's cause is hopeless

32. P—B4, R x P+; 33. K—K4, N—B4+; 34. K—Q4, R—B6; 35. K x N, R x B; 36. P—B5, R—B5; 37. K—N4, R—K5; 38. P—K6, P x P; 39. R—R7+, K—Q3 and White resigned. The crippled queenside majority never even had to move!

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

To claim a contract, be asked to play on, and find that you have miscalculated, is more than a little undignified This doesn't happen often in the higher regions of tournament play, but anyone might have had the same blind spot as the declarer on this deal from a team event

Dealer, North, N-S Vulnerable

West		East
	♠ A 9 8 5 ♥ — ♦ K 10 9 6 5 4 ♣ 7 6 3	
♠ Q 3 ♥ A K J 10 5 3 ♦ J ♣ J 10 5 4	N W E S	♠ J 4 2 ♥ 9 7 6 4 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ Q 9 8
	♠ K 10 7 6 ♥ Q 8 ♦ Q 7 3 2 ♣ A K 2	

The bidding went

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	No	No
1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♥	5 ♥
dble	No	5 ♠	No
No	No		

North's Three Hearts provoked the opponents into a sacrifice at the Five level. A tactical underbid of Two Spades might have been a better idea

In Five Spades, South ruffed the heart lead, drew two rounds of trumps, and ruffed the second heart After a diamond to the Queen the position was.

	♠ — ♥ — ♦ K 10 9 6 5 ♣ 7 6 3	
♠ — ♥ A J 10 5 ♦ — ♣ J 10 5 4	N W E S	♠ J ♥ 9 7 6 ♦ A ♣ Q 9 8
	♠ 10 7 ♥ — ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ A K 2	

South led a diamond and, in the phrase made immortal by the late Eric Silverstone, invited the opponents to 'make their own arrangements'. The arrangement that East made was to return a heart, forcing South to ruff, and to decline to ruff diamonds until South had no more This left the declarer with a losing club

Oddly enough, the play is quite simple if the defenders take their diamond ruff early on. After West has ruffed, South will need only to gauge the trump position, this should not be difficult, because a player with Q J x of the trump suit will not normally lead a singleton.

TERENCE REESE

stamps

The conservation of wildlife provides the theme for the two stamps issued in the Isle of Man for use on the Christmas mail. The 8p stamp (above) shows a robin with a view of the Manx coastline at Port Erin as a background. The buildings of the Port Erin marine biological station can be seen at the left. The aquarium and fish hatcheries attract many visitors during the summer months. The companion 6p stamp features a wren. Both designs are the work of John Nicholson, RI, the Douglas artist who has designed many other Manx stamps as well as coins and banknotes for the island. Most of the Christmas stamps from other countries reproduce paintings of the Holy Family but one of the New Zealand stamps features the dominion's oldest stone church, St. Mary's, New Plymouth, which was consecrated in 1846, and a United States stamp shows 19th century toys.

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. What is acid rock?
2. Apartheid refers to the system of total racial discrimination between the black and white of South Africa. What is the origin of the word?
3. With what would you associate the parsec?
4. What is cream of tartar?
5. A light year is the distance of 9.5 × 10^{12} kms and the nearest star is 4 3 light years away. What is the name of the star?

ANSWERS

1 Hyper amplified music of the 1960s, that consisted of improvisation and distorted electronic effects It reflected the underground and craze for drugs especially LSD.

2. It is an Afrikan word meaning apartness, and is referred to by the South African government as separate development, or self development.

3 Proxima Centauri

4. Astronomy. A parsec is a unit of distance used by astronomers. One parsec is equal to 3.26 light years.

5. Also known as argol, it is used in its purest form in baking powder and electroplating. It is obtained from the lees of wine fermentation, in which it occurs as potassium hydrogen tartrate.

this india

prize rs 30 for the entry given first

A boom is predicted in the multi-crore beauty industry. Heralding this hope is none other than Maharashtra's finance minister Ramrao Adik. His "make-up kit" is getting heavier by the day. Some say it is due to the presence of whirring TV cameras at all ministerial functions because foundation, dyed hair, blushing lips and pencilled eyes look a lot better than deadpan, wrinkled, natural look. The other incentive is keeping up with the glamorous revenue minister Shalini Patil, who carries a beautician wherever she goes and never is without make-up or three-rowed pearl necklace or eyebrows perpetually arched at revenue officials. Truly is beauty infectious—*Blitz* (Usha Gupta, Calcutta)

NEW DELHI: This happened at the Rashtrapati Bhavan banquet to the Kenyan President. The table arrangement was such that chubby-faced Subramaniam Swami was sandwiched between two chirpy damsels: Roda Mistry and Kumudbhen Joshi. Mrs Gandhi, looking relaxed and radiant, tiptoed to their table. Roda promptly complained about the thorn between two roses. Mrs G: No Roda I think it is a rose between two thorns—*Blitz* (Ghanshyam Das Gupta, Calcutta)

BANGALORE: A consignment of foodgrains, valued at Rs 4.15 lakhs, despatched from Madras to Krishnarajnagar, Chamarajnagar and Mysore in Karnataka, has vanished in thin air. The consignment, despatched in 1966, did not reach its destination. The food department in Karnataka took up the matter with the railways for the first time in 1970—four years later. As the claim had not been preferred within six months, as required by the rules, the railways turned it down. A reference to the incident has been made by the comptroller and auditor-general of India in his report for 1979-'80, without making any comments—*Times of India* (Anand R. Deshpande, Solapur)

CALICUT: A pre-degree student who obtained over 700 marks through dubious means now studies in the Trivandrum Medical College, according to Mr V. V. Dakshina Moorthy, MLA. Participating in the budget discussion at a meeting of the Calicut University Senate, he said the student had only less than 300 marks in the original certificate issued after the April-May examination of 1980. But he applied for a duplicate certificate and with the complicity of some persons could get one certificate with over 700 marks. After Mr Moorthy had given the details in writing, vice-chancellor K. A. Jaleel, who was in the chair, agreed to enquire into the case—*Sunday Standard* (K. K. Nair, Trivandrum)

BOMBAY: June has 31 days, according to the central railway. A UNI correspondent in Bombay produced his season pass on 31 March, the expiry date of the pass, for renewal for the next quarter. The counter clerk at VT station wrote on the pass "expires 31-6-81." When it was pointed out that June had 30 days, the clerk insisted that as the earlier pass had expired on 31 March, the renewed pass should expire on the 31st, whether the month had 30 or 31 days—*Free Press Bulletin* (Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, Thana West)

MADRAS: An officer of a government department has been promoted long after his retirement—this sounds incredible but it has happened, thanks to the intervention of the long arm of justice. Following a Court direction given in August 1980, the state government ordered in the first week of February this year that Mr T. O. Jacob is deemed to have been promoted as superintending engineer with effect from the date on which his immediate junior was promoted as S. E. Mr Jacob had challenged the latter's promotion overlooking him. This is the first time in the history of the highways department and the P. W. D. that an employee has got a promotion after retirement—*Hindu* (N. K. Suryanarayanan, Madras)

NEW DELHI: Lok Dal member N. P. Shahi pleaded with Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Shyam Lal Yadav to protect him from some Congress(I) women members who always "teased" him when he spoke. Mr Shahi said Miss Saroj Khaparde (Congress-I) and some other women constantly "pin-pricked" him while he was on his feet. He said he was making this complaint of "Adam-teasing" to the chair as it would not be taken note of outside the House. Mr Shahi voiced his grievance after interruptions by Miss Khaparde while he was speaking on the calling-attention motion tabled by him. As Miss Khaparde continued on to provoke, Mr Yadav pulled her up saying that the time of the House was being wasted unnecessarily—*Hindustan Times* (S. Joshi, New Delhi)

without comment

Political matters are all mundane matters. Politics is all mundane. Professional life is mundane. I am not a mundane person—V. C. Shukla in *Weekend Review*

I support the Madhya Pradesh chief minister because he was selected by Mrs Gandhi. Tomorrow if she selects Dara Singh (the wrestler), instead of Arjun Singh I'd still support him by raising not one but two hands—Kamal Nath, MP to *India Today* after V. C. Shukla's ouster from the cabinet

Where were all these cars for all these years? Were all the people injured also kept in hiding for all these years?—Jyoti Basu, CM of West Bengal on Asoke Sen's allegation that the state buses and trams displayed at Esplanade East had been damaged in the late 1950s

There are *swamis* and *swamis*. I don't know which *swami* he is, probably an international *swami*—Vasant Sathe on Subramaniam Swami quoted in *Current*

Everybody is honest only so long as honesty is insisted upon—C. M. Stephen, union minister for communications

Karnataka state is not my grandfather's property. My forefathers have not left this state to me as a *jagir*— R. Gundu Rao, Karnataka CM quoted in *Current*

I have great respect for Mrs Gandhi and was extremely hurt by her remarks—Sheikh Abdullah on Mrs Gandhi's remarks that a state government would not last even half an hour if the centre wanted to topple it

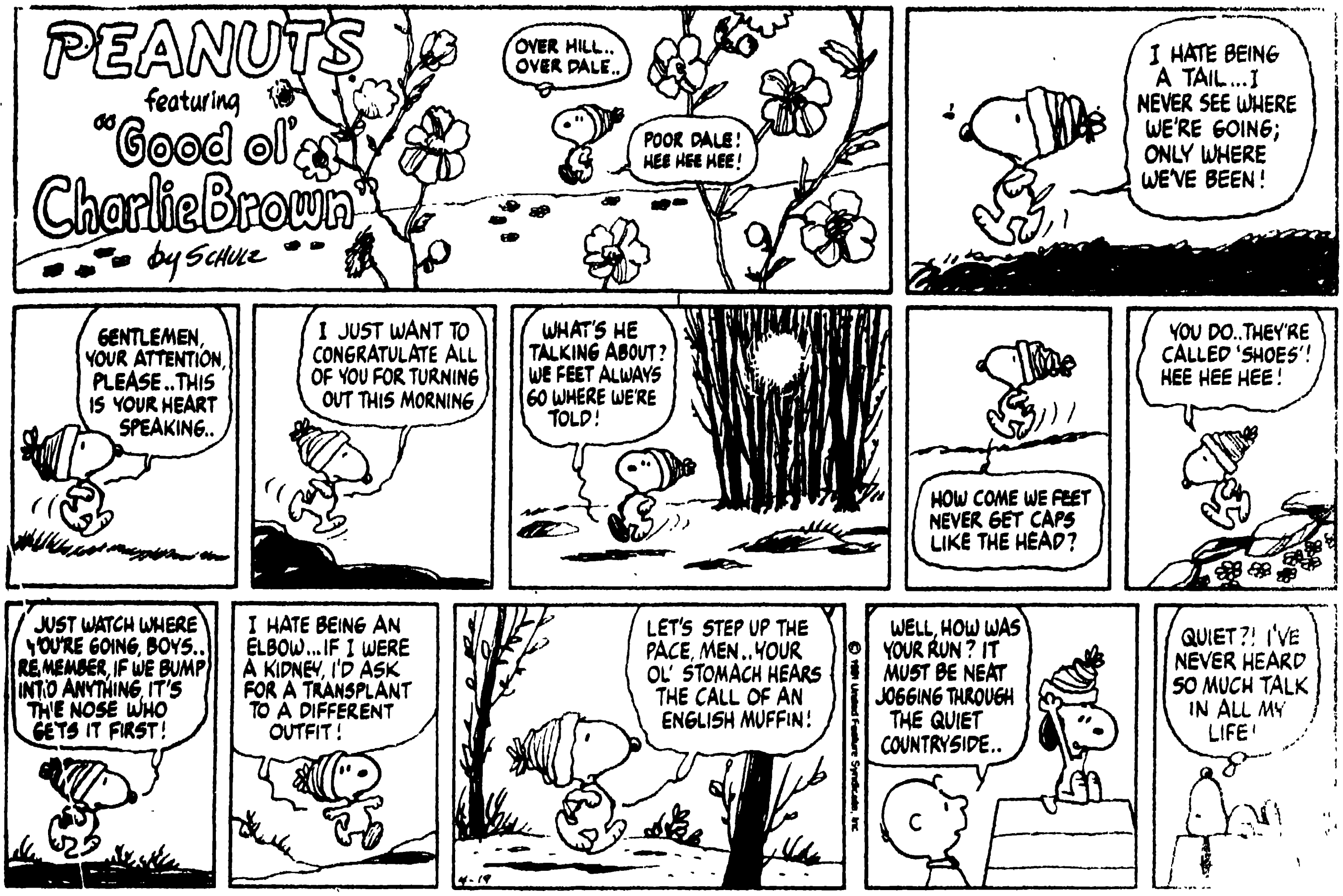
A mother tells lies to save her child sometimes and the press should be like the mother—Vishwanath Pratap Singh, UP chief minister

If India was amenable to greater contact with China, this would weaken the Soviet position. The opportunity exists and they (the Chinese) want to take advantage of it. It would be a major reverse for the Soviet Union—Subramaniam Swamy, Janata MP

India should not be worried about threat of war from China. Even militarily, because of (lack of) oxygen we cannot cross Tibet—Deng Xiaoping, Chinese vice chairman

If you look at the world today, regionalism has developed. It is only our region that does not have cooperation and understanding—Zia-ur-Rahman, Bangladesh President

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik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HOW COME WE FEET NEVER GET CAPS LIKE THE HEAD?
YOU DO..THEY'RE CALLED 'SHOES'! HEE HEE HEE!
JUST WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, BOYS.. REMEMBER, IF WE BUMP INTO ANYTHING, IT'S THE NOSE WHO GETS IT FIRST!
I HATE BEING AN ELBOW...IF I WERE A KIDNEY, I'D ASK FOR A TRANSPLANT TO A DIFFERENT OUTFIT!
LET'S STEP UP THE PACE, MEN..YOUR OL' STOMACH HEARS THE CALL OF AN ENGLISH MUFFIN!
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4-19
WELL, HOW WAS YOUR RUN? IT MUST BE NEAT JOGGING THROUGH THE QUIET COUNTRYSIDE..
QUIET?! I'VE NEVER HEARD SO MUCH TALK IN ALL MY LIFE!

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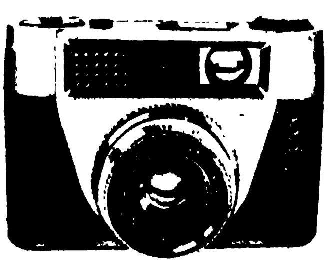

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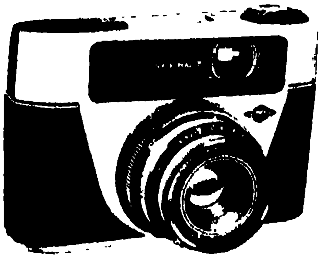

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WAR ON COMMUNISTS

Mrs Gandhi seems to be at war with communists. While the CPI(M) has been openly attacked, the CPI too has come in for special treatment; efforts are being made to sabotage its Soviet connections. Recently, at Mrs Gandhi's behest, an organisation called the Friends of the Soviet Union was set up as a rival to the CPI-sponsored Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS). Earlier, ISCUS used to select 15 Indian students every year to go to Moscow's Friendship University, in addition to the 50 chosen by the government of India. The Janata government stopped this practice by assuming sole authority for selection. Now an attempt is being made to enable Friends of the Soviet Union, in place of ISCUS, to select some students in addition to those chosen by the government. Since India's largest tobacco-buyer is the USSR, the government is also planning to take over tobacco exports. Most of India's tobacco which is exported comes from Andhra Pradesh, the CPI general secretary Rajeshwara Rao's home state. Exports to the USSR are channelled through traders who pay a regular levy to the party.

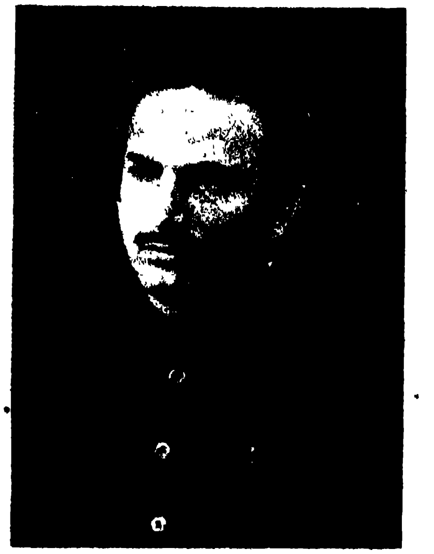
BACK TO INDIRA (CONGRESS)

Siddhartha Shankar Ray, who is desperately trying to enter the Congress(I), contacted his old friend R. K. Dhawan on 18 March. He told Dhawan that he would like to meet the PM. Ray was to leave for Bangalore the next morning and would return to Delhi on 27 March. So Dhawan told him to wait for a telephone call from the PM's residence on 28 March. Ray cancelled all his professional engagements on that day and stayed home at 1/19 Shantiniketan, hoping Mrs Gandhi would call up; she did not. But a few days later, there was good news: the PM had decided to pardon him and take him back into her party. Only, he would have to wait for some time, although, for the time being, he could consider himself a part of the Congress(I). Priya Ranjan Das Munshi (who had also sent feelers to the Congress-I not very long ago), on the other hand, is not happy about being associated with Mr Ray. Besides, for some tactical reason, Mrs Gandhi wanted Munshi to help the local Congress(I) as the West Bengal PCC(U) president.

CHANGES FROM "ABOVE"

THE Youth Congress(I) has at last found a proper home. After spending over a year in a single room in the Congress(I) headquarters at 24 Akbar Road, the IYC(I) has now been allotted 21 Janpath, a bungalow near Windsor Place. Significantly, this bungalow, like the one earlier allotted to the Youth Congress during the emergency, is situated on Janpath, though it is a poor cousin of number 10 Janpath. Arun Nehru, the Prime Minister's nephew who has inherited her Rae Bareilly seat, has been asked to keep a hawkish eye over the money spent by the IYC(I). He has set such stringent guidelines that all the officebearers are unhappy. There are restrictions on the use of the telephone, expenditure on daily travel within Delhi and on tours. For example, general secretaries are authorised only two trips outside Delhi in a month. And that is not the end of the interference from "above." The president, Ghulam Nabi Azad has been informed by "higher-ups" that after some days he will have to appoint a woman general secretary to give a more representative look to the set-up. Who this person will be, even Azad does not know.

Ghulam Nabi Azad



MINISTER MUMBLES

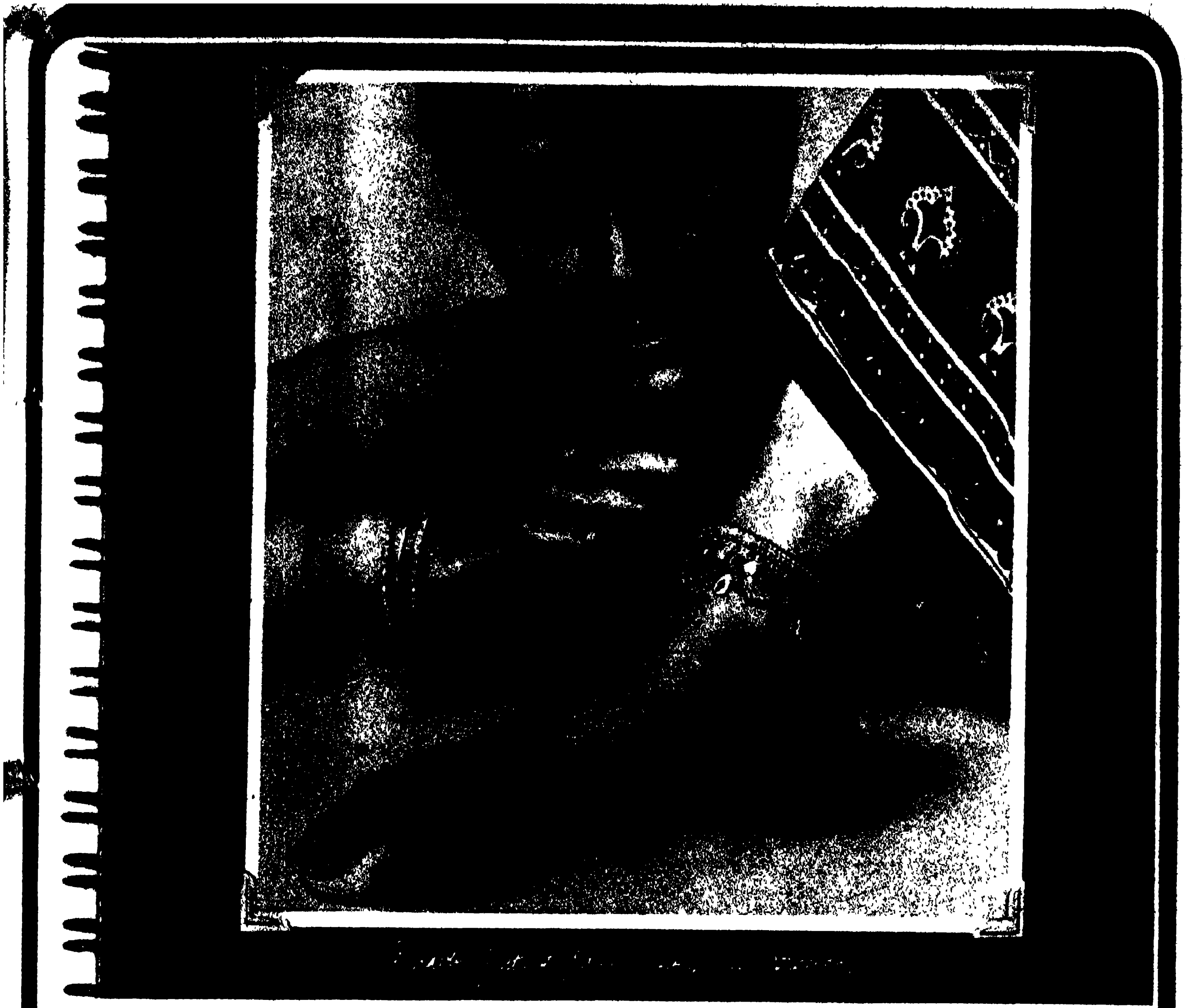
Vasant Sathe

National film awards press conferences have always been difficult exercises for I and B ministers. In the past, the minister concerned made it a point to rehearse the ceremony by making it a point to learn the names of the awardwinning regional language films. Not so Mr Vasant Sathe. He came to the 7 April function in Delhi confident he could pronounce all the names—only to be disappointed. Except for one Hindi film, the union minister found every other film's name a tongue-twister, including one "Akha...le Sandhon" (Mrinal Sen's *Akaler Sandhaney*, which won the first prize). As Mr Sathe intoned the Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and other names, most of the last syllables were inaudible. To make things worse, he unnecessarily tried to shield Mr V. Shantaram from newsmen's queries. Considering this is the most important official press conference devoted to films, Mr Sathe's showing was poor.

RUDRAKSHA BEADS

Even in these days of agile reporting, some momentous government decisions pass unnoticed—like the one to permit the import of *rudraksha* beads "under open general licence for stock or sale" or even personal use. According to the commerce secretary, P. K. Kaul, the open general licence which became effective from 1 April was issued because "it is said they (*rudraksha* beads) restore health."

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN



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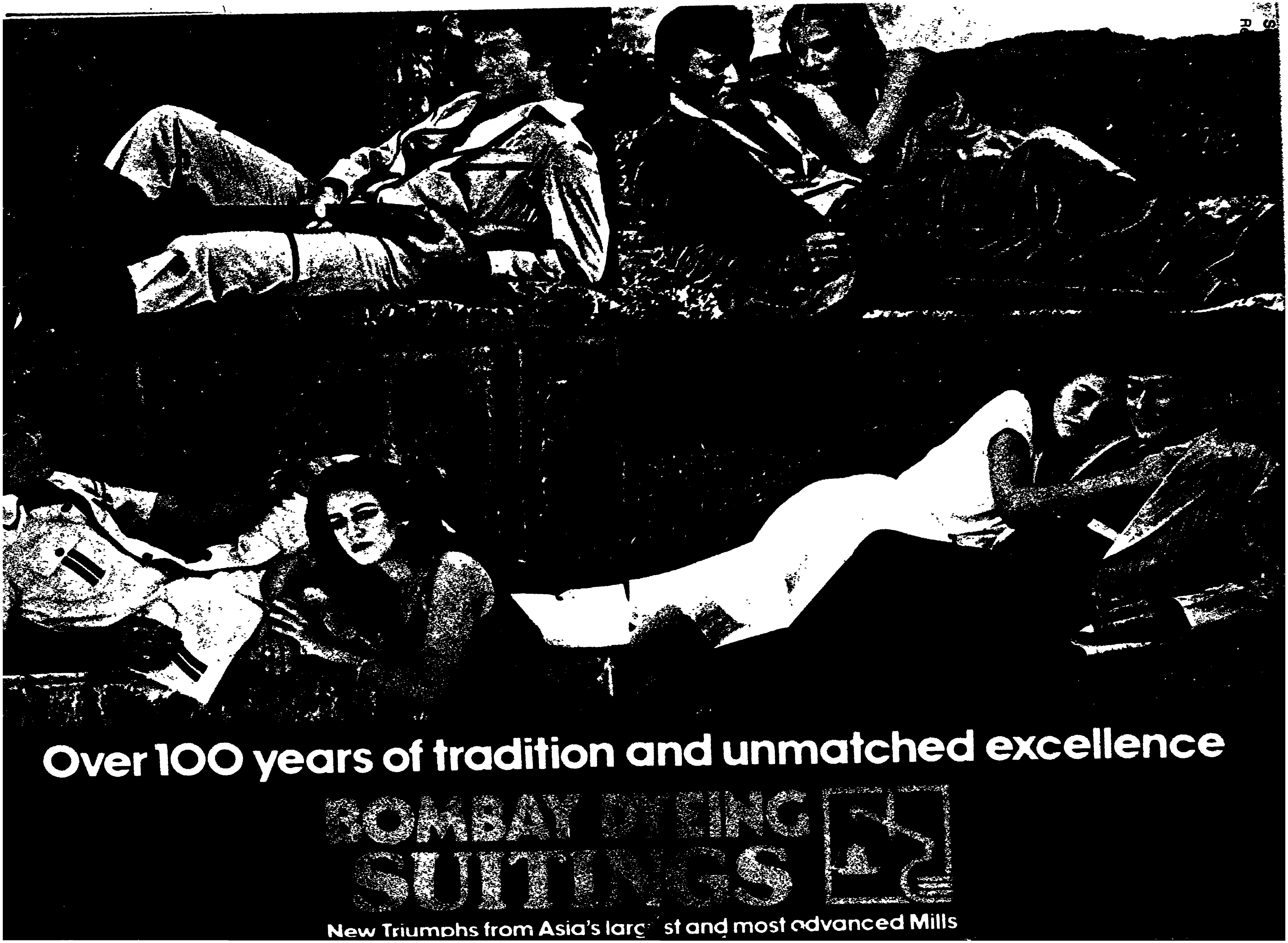
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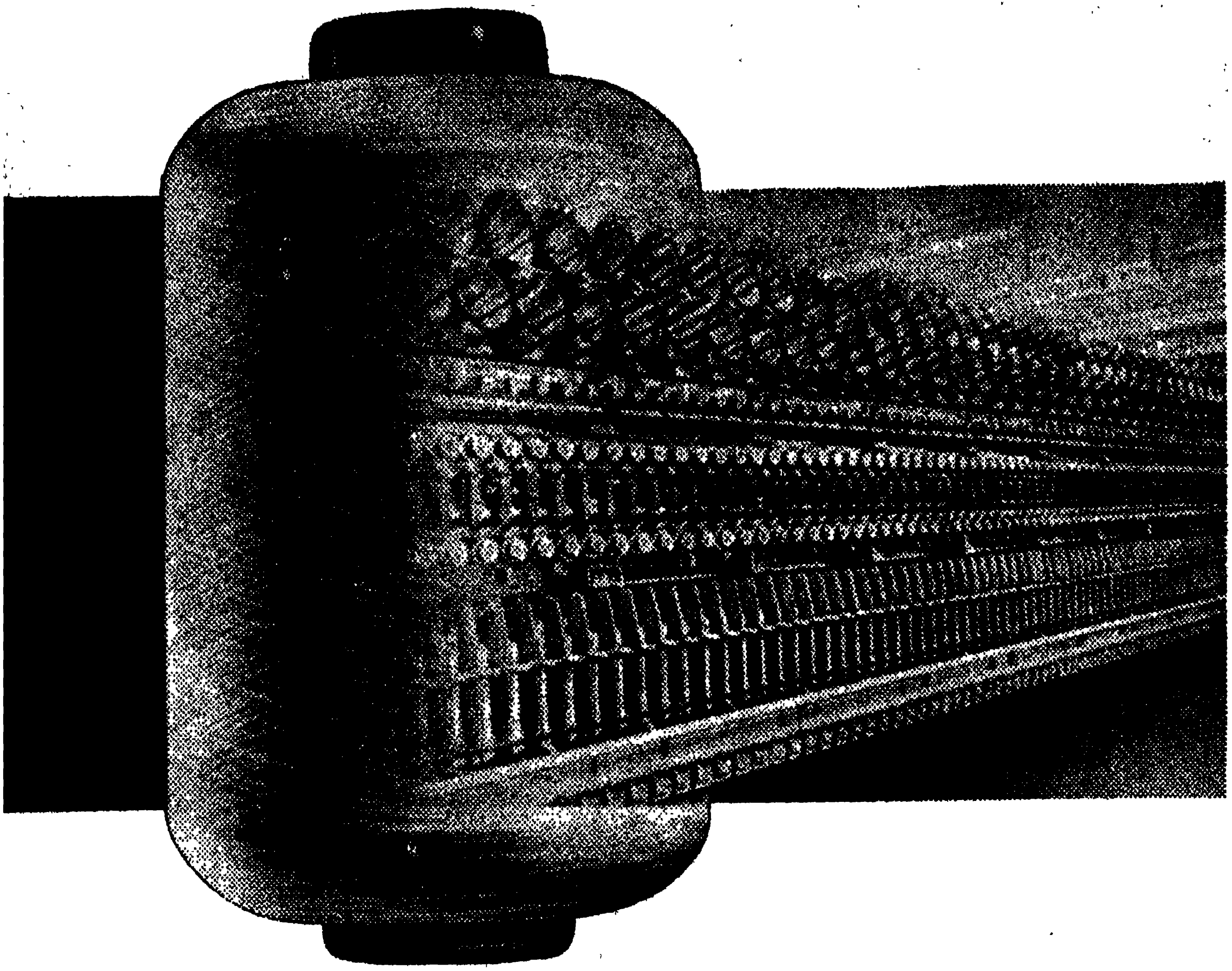

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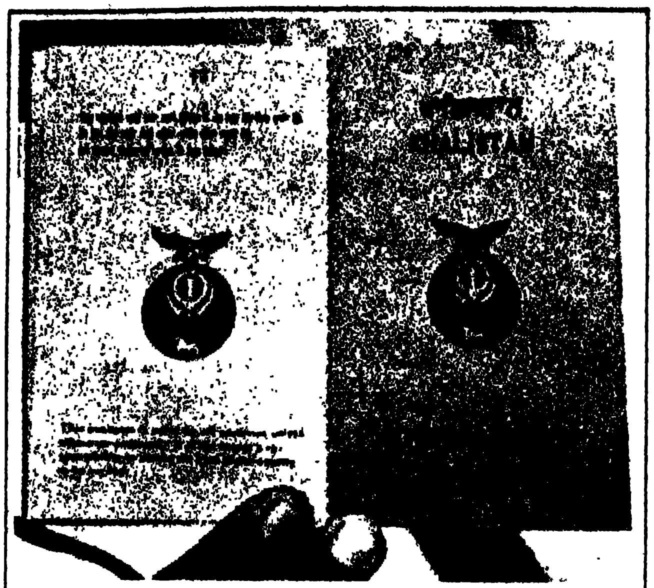

In March this year some Sikh leaders decided to flog a tired old horse: raise the demand for a new status for the Sikhs. What are the genuine grievances that these second-rung leaders are articulating and why does the Sikh psyche sometimes fall a prey to these politicians? A report by Anil Saari **Page 8**

The infamous American Mafia has now spread its tentacles to India. Recently one of its hitmen was in the capital with a specific task: to kill an Indian taxi-driver who had overheard a conversation between two foreign opium smugglers, connected with the Mafia. An investigative report. **Page 16**

Shobha Kilachand narrates the story of how a cruel and unfeeling mother-in-law and a spineless husband made the life of a lively, middle class Bombay career wife a nightmare. Only the girl's name is fictional; the rest of the story is true **Page 28**

On 13 April, curtains finally came down on 82-year-old veteran CPI leader S.A. Dange, when he was unanimously expelled by the national council of the CPI—a party he had helped form. A full story on how the party threw out a founding father. Page 22

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EXCLUSIVE EXCLUSIVE EXCLUSIVE

BY KULDIP NAYAR

Pak naval officer shipped into Bombay

Officials in the home ministry and the Shipping Corporation of India are red in the face over a major slip-up. In the Pakistani shipping delegation that came to Bombay in February, there was a serving naval officer in civvies. And it was only an indignant note from the chief of the naval staff, Admiral R. L. Pereira, that made them realise their grevious error.

The Pakistani delegation, including the naval officer, had been put up at a multi-storeyed five-star hotel overlooking the Indian naval dockyard in Bombay, from where the officer had a grandstand view of the naval ships berthed in the harbour. It must have been easy for his trained eyes to assess the state of readiness of the Indian navy, the equipment and the installations. With a telephoto lens, or perhaps even without, a camera could have recorded much of the scene. And the officer could have simplified the problem for a more leisured and detailed study by the Pakistani intelligence men.

Of course, one cannot presumably, hang up "Photography forbidden" boards at hotels and post guards outside rooms to keep regular vigil on occupants whose windows open on restricted areas. Even if one were to do so, there would be no guarantee against spies clicking their cameras. However, the points raised by Admiral Pereira need serious consideration. The two basic questions he has asked in his note to the home ministry are: Why is clearance given to such delegations without consulting armed forces headquarters? Why are foreign delegates accommodated at places from where defence installations or activities are easy to observe? If the Admiral were to have his way, all foreigners, even civilians, would be kept away from such places.

He has suggested to the home ministry not to allow foreigners free access to sensitive areas like military cantonments. He has specifically mentioned the visits of Pakistanis to cantonments. Perhaps, the suggestion of the Admiral is worth pursuing, though spies, alas, need not be only Pakistanis.

Home ministry officials are not so much worried about Admiral Pereira's suggestions as by the failure to detect the Pakistani naval officer in the shipping delegation because it is the ministry which processed the delegation. Intelligence Bureau people and others have already had discussions on the subject. However, they are all too conscious that there are no foolproof methods to keep defence installations free of prying eyes, especially when they are in the cities. The matter will ultimately come up before the coordination committee of the cabinet secretariat. All intelligence services of the country, including defence intelligence, are represented on the committee and an additional secretary to the government of India presides over its deliberations. Though nothing much can be done to save the Bombay naval dockyard from prying eyes, perhaps building laws could be so regulated in Vishakhapatnam that the bigger dockyard coming up there is not exposed to the same dangers.

While the naval chief's note is engaging government attention, another matter that has come up for consideration is the manner in which retired military top brass have been revealing, what they should not, in published accounts of their years in service. When Lt-Gen Kaul published his *Untold Story* on the Sino-Indian war in 1962, there was a flutter in South Block. But he died before the government could decide whether or not to censure him. Some other similar books are under the scrutiny of the government.

But what has recently disturbed the defence ministry is the disclosure Wing Commander Rampal has made about the shooting down of an Indian Canberra bomber by Pakistani jet fighters on 10 April 1959. At that time Pandit Nehru had taken exception to the shooting down of a friendly country's aircraft that had strayed into Pakistan as a result of the crew's navigational error. In his published account, Wing Commander Rampal has admitted that the Canberra was on a spying mission. He has said that when the project, "VIP," went awry, the Air Marshal in command who had given them the go-ahead, disowned responsibility. The government is considering whether to prevent publication of such accounts, even a long while after the event. One view is that it does help the "enemy" in more ways than one. Another is that the very disclosure is an unpatriotic act.

It will be indeed a tragedy if the government were to put a lid on such memoirs. In foreign countries, it is common for high-ranking military officers to write about successes or failures of their missions. In so doing, they have only helped the whole nation to have an understanding of defence matters—something that is so woefully lacking in India. In our country there is a marked tendency to recount only success stories. Till today, the report of Lt.-Gen. Henderson Brooks on India's debacle in 1962 is classified, though a foreign journalist has published extracts from it. The Janata government, whatever its motives, thought of leaking out some portions of the report. The then defence minister, Mr Jagjivan Ram, changed his mind at the last moment. Apparently, he feared that as he was also a member of the central government at that time, though he had little to do with defence then—it was a Nehru-Krishna Menon affair—some of the mud would have splattered on him.

The pity is that the same zeal that is shown in guarding secrets from us is not shown in guarding secrets from others. But then, perhaps, that is all that one can expect from those who think that the ridiculous "Photography prohibited" boards at civil airports and other places are what security requires.

Superb, but...

The hit generation (29 March) was superb. But the author forgot to mention Basu Bhattacharya's *Grihapravesh*, which ran well in Calcutta and Bangalore, but could not be shown in the Bombay circuit for want of a distributor.
Anil Khataukar, Bangalore

The love scene from *Aakrosh* which you chose as your cover picture is one of the film's least significant scenes. It is a pity that a person of the calibre of Govind Nihalani should publicise his film through such a still.
Parmeshwar Ka, Indian Theatre Centre, Bombay

The cover story was informative, but the photograph of Padmini Kolhapure in the nude shocked me.
Siddhartha Roy, Karanjia, Orissa

No mention was made of Biplab Roy Chowdhury's *Shodh* and Buddhadev Dasgupta's *Dooratwa*. Do these two directors not deserve to be included in the class of young filmmakers who are "making good at the box-office?"
T. Bhaumik, Calcutta

Homosexual?

Beethoven's homosexual affairs (15 March) is a post mortem of the maestro with pornographic pincers. Kishore Chatterjee sniffs homosexuality in every tie of friendship between two men, even when it concerns the composer and his fervent admirer Karl Holz, his fond biographer Anton Schindler and the young Gerhard von Breuning. During the last years of Beethoven's life Holz was his close confidant and his emotional nature is suggested by the fact that he was found weeping at Beethoven's open grave. An able violinist, Beethoven jocularly called him "Holz Christi" (Holz means wood, implying the cross of Christ). The young composer dedicated his violin concerto in D major, opus 61 to Stephen von Breuning, uncle of Gerhard. Such heights of spiritual ecstasy as of this work are rarely attained by musical compositions. In none of Beethoven's authoritative biographies is there even a hint of the allegations Mr Chatterjee brings against him.

As for Beethoven's relation with his nephew Karl, Mr Chatterjee could not mention a single authority or research work in support of his proposition. His allegations are mostly unauthenticated. It is true that after the maestro won Karl's custody in the appeal court Karl showed some inclination to keep in touch with his mother whom the composer intensely disliked. It is equally true that Beethoven's high degree of responsibility for the boy's welfare finally led him to seek a military career for him. He was like a father to Karl who provided inspiration to Beethoven's intensely sensitive mind; but to say that Beethoven's sensitivity turned him into a homosexual is wrong.
Sunrit Deb, Calcutta

The author remains vague about the sources on which he bases his observations, precisely because he has none. No mention can be found in Beethoven's biographies of the 'conversation books' to which Mr Chatterjee refers. The author's conclusions also do not follow naturally from the facts he places. On what basis does he connect Beethoven's note "sexual enjoyment...bestial act" to the "love" for Karl? It could surely have been a general observation of the philosopher in the musician. And what abnormality does he see in "Come into my arms...my faithful heart..." from the Beethoven letter he quotes? Karl's mother was disliked, not only by Beethoven, but by the rest of the family too for her extra-marital affairs. Karl, for his part, wanted to join his mother, because, he felt, her company would offer him more scope to ventilate his worldly feelings. True, he was interested in wine, women, and cards. But Mr Chatterjee forgets that the maestro tried his best to keep Karl away from his mother's influence, and nurse him after his own image.
Sandwip Mukherjee, Calcutta

Thanks for the daring story on the secret lifestyle of a legendary maestro. Now we are anxious to read about Verlaine, Rimbaud, Michaelangelo and Oscar Wilde.
Punya Saikia, Digboi

Caught on!

R. K. Karanjia on your cover (22 March): the "I'll scratch your back you scratch mine" bug is surely catching on.
Srinivas Raj Sharma, Hyderabad

No doubt Russy Karanjia is one of the best editors in India.
Niranjan Mishra, Puri

Russy Karanjia seems happy enough with wine, women and Sai Baba's cosmic energy.
Parwaiz Alam, Siwan, Bihar

However successful Russy Karanjia may be as a journalist, truth is always a casualty in the columns of his *Blitz*. Beautifully tailored shirts and nostalgic thoughts of his parents' wealth do make Karanjia a communist of his own kind. But then he was a great admirer of the late Shah of Iran.
Chandroo Kunneth, Palghat, Kerala

Running on the wrong lines

The Indian Railways *(Why are there railway accidents?* 8 March) must be run on purely commercial, not political, lines. Even after the recent increase in freight and passenger fares, our rates are the lowest in the world. Because of this, we cannot put enough money in the depreciation fund for relaying 11,000 kms of tracks and replacing 37,000 wagons and 7,500 coaches. Besides, running expenses are very high. We spend as much as 60 per cent of railway revenue on the wages of 1.7 million employees. Can any pragmatic commercial concern continue to run on these lines? Although the authorities understand this, political factors prevent them from reducing the wage bill. By modernisation of track maintenance methods, the staff could be reduced, efficiency improved and the risk of accident lessened. We must try to follow the system of the Japanese National Railways. In Japan, small branch lines which cannot operate economically when attached to the larger network are run by small private concerns as feeder lines to the main lines, thus reducing overhead expenses. In no country do the railways own so much land on both sides of the track as in India; and not all of it is necessary. Why cannot we try to build up funds by selling/subletting these millions of hectares of land for agriculture or industry?

M. N. Bhide, Pune

If 10,000 kms out of 65,000 kms of railway tracks are "superannuated" the present railway minister should answer the pressing questions raised in *Sunday*.
S. Gupta, Burdwan, West Bengal

Mr Fernandes' warning of "many railway accidents in the days to come" is prophetic. There were a record number during his own days in power. But were those hundreds of accidents for which he owned responsibility due to Rail Bhavan's neglect of gangmen? He admits that accidents occur due to "broken lines" and "detonators". Who puts the detonators on the tracks? Only democracy tolerates anarchists.
Antony Wilson, Secunderabad

AMU's ills

Congratulations for *Aligarh's communal student 'leaders'* (1 February), which exposed the corruption in Aligarh Muslim University, an institution of international fame. I had appeared twice, in 1978 and 1979, for the MBA admission test at AMU. From what I saw, merit is the last criterion of selection. Admissions are based on names and nominations. Even candidates who had not appeared for the written test were called for the interview, and some of them were finally selected.
Shaikh Altaf Hossain, Rourkela, Orissa

The report has many factual errors. Firstly, the wall poster "Hassan Banna is our leader" on a university wall had nothing to do with the students' agitation. It was put up much earlier by some Arab students. Much has been said about Prof. Irfan Habib's scholarship. Except for his doctoral thesis, Prof. Habib has in fact had nothing published during the two decades. Yet, you claim that he is a scholar par excellence. Prof Habib is well-known on the campus, not as a scholar, but as a trade union leader who in one academic session launched no less than 200 agitations.

That the majority of students did not take an active part in the recent agitation is a gross misrepresentation of facts. Throughout the period of the agitation, which lasted about a fortnight, not a single voice of dissent was heard on the campus against the stand taken by AMUSU.
Mahboob Ahmad, Member of the Action Committee, Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union, Aligarh

Winning men from ten

According to Piousji *(Khaas Baat*, 22 March), Deepa is 16 years old. We saw her first in a Telugu movie five years ago, showing her vital statistics. Prior to that she acted in a few Malayalam movies. She must have developed all those curves when she was hardly ten!
S. V. Ratnam, Warangal

Beasts are better off

Millions of harijans in this country are grateful to you for *The senseless intolerance of caste Hindus* (22 March). In India, even cows are more fortunate than harijans.
Kala Mand, Madras

I stay at a scheduled caste college students' hostel in Visakhapatnam which houses nearly 100 scheduled caste/scheduled tribe students from various districts of Andhra Pradesh. On 21 March, a friend of mine, a fellow boarder, died in a road accident. After the post mortem on 22 March we carried his dead body to Chaoolamadam, the Hindu cremation ground. Although the ground is a public place, caste Hindus (who also have links with the RSS) have managed to capture it. There are seven raised squares for burning dead bodies 'allotted' to various castes. None of these is for harijans. Instead, harijans are forced to burn their bodies in a dirty place, some distance away from the raised squares. The people who control the cremation ground refused to burn my friend's body since he was a harijan. Instead he showed us a dirty spot which we could use; we refused to burn the body there. An argument followed. When the situation got explosive, they relented and agreed to let us burn the body on one of the raised squares.

In our hostel there are a number of students who, despite holding additional qualifications, have been looking in vain for jobs. And reservations have not helped either. Some of the students work by night in hotels or as autorickshaw drivers, and study at degree colleges during the day. As for the hostel, it does not even have lavatories. This attitude towards harijans has taken many of them into radical politics; many students in our hostel and most members of the radical students unions on the Andhra university campus are harijans.
D. Venkateswara Rao, Visakhapatnam

Sankrabhai's death is a story of unbelievable inhumanity. If this sort of barbaric violence continues, national integrity shall be threatened. Both the central and state governments should try to put out the flames of this dangerous agitation, in order to protect the constitutional rights of depressed classes.
Abhijit Malakar, Chackmaghat, Tripura

It is a shame that a harijan girl with a post-graduate degree in sociology is being forced to work as a labourer *(Will someone give Binabehn a job?* 22 March) in the birthplace of Gandhiji. This is the real picture of unemployment today. High-sounding terms like women's lib, reservations for harijans and equality mean little to this individual who has no one to back her. We hope a nationalised bank, commercial concern, educational institution or the government itself will offer Binabehn a job appropriate to her educational qualifications.
Satyen Basu, Calcutta

What M. J. Akbar calls "the senseless intolerance of caste Hindus" can at best be regarded as an inevitable outburst of accumulated frustration and anger. The reservation policy offers upward social mobility to the worst victims of our caste system. This sponsorship was required to bring about equality and eradicate the caste system. But is it not absurd to keep on guiding a man who has been able to stand on his own feet? Status is a reward which should be earned individually; why let the government enforce status on some sections when others are fighting for it, tooth and nail? Agreed, financial aid and relaxation of age limits for lower castes is justified. But why relax merit? Merit is acquired; so why this strange equality between a first class general engineer and a second class SC/ST engineer? Many unemployed general candidates are forced into work which even illiterates would rather not take up. Their sin? Being born into an upper caste; they have to pay for their forefathers' misdeeds.
Animesh Bhattacharjee, Shillong

I mean, 1980

Your article on the international film festival, 1981 *(Pssst...Dirty pictures!* 18 January) quoted me as having made some remarks about the festival. I was in no way involved in the festival, and had no occasion to make such remarks. Perhaps your correspondent was quoting some remarks I had made with reference to the Bangalore festival of January 1980. I had said at the time that the directorate of film festivals looks upon international film festivals mainly as a launching pad for the films of a few selected directors. Some of these directors are not only conscious of this, but tend to use the festivals to further their own interests, even at the cost of newcomers. Ours is a huge country, and each year we see a new region flower with creative activity in films. I feel we could deliberately concentrate on giving exposure to the maximum number of creative films, even if sometimes this can only be done at the cost of opportunities to well-known filmmakers.
M. Bhaktavatsala, Bangalore

Who cares?

The resignation of one member after another, and the chairman's sacking, proves that the Minorities Commission is a meaningless body *(Minorities Commission: twice orphaned?* 29 March) How sincere the government is about helping the nation's minorities is clear from the interview with the commission's ex-chairman. The problems of the commission are an outcome of the Janata government's faulty policies. It is no good having the body any longer unless it is given more powers.
Sheikh Nazimuddin Chishti, Imphal

Guns for justice

Wanted: dead or alive (15 March) honestly traced the origins of a dacoit, and proved irrefutably that it is not some inborn evil that turns people nto *baghis* but the injustices they suffer.
K. R. Pa, Bangalore

t appears that Phoolan Devi and Pan Singh Tomar were not originally dacoits, but ordinary citizens like any of us. It is social injustice and caste feelings which forced them to become terrors.
P. K. Chandra, Kharagpur

Why doesn't our government send Amitabh and Dharmendra to the ravines, to catch Phoolan and the others?
A. K. Saini, Loharu, Haryana

Last letter

Judging from the way West Bengal's Left Front government has incapacitated itself in the face of the Congress(I) onslaught, its leading party, the CPI(M), should be called CPI (masochistic).
Apurba K. Ghosh, 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Rs 50 for the last letter

SIKHS: THE THIRD NATION?

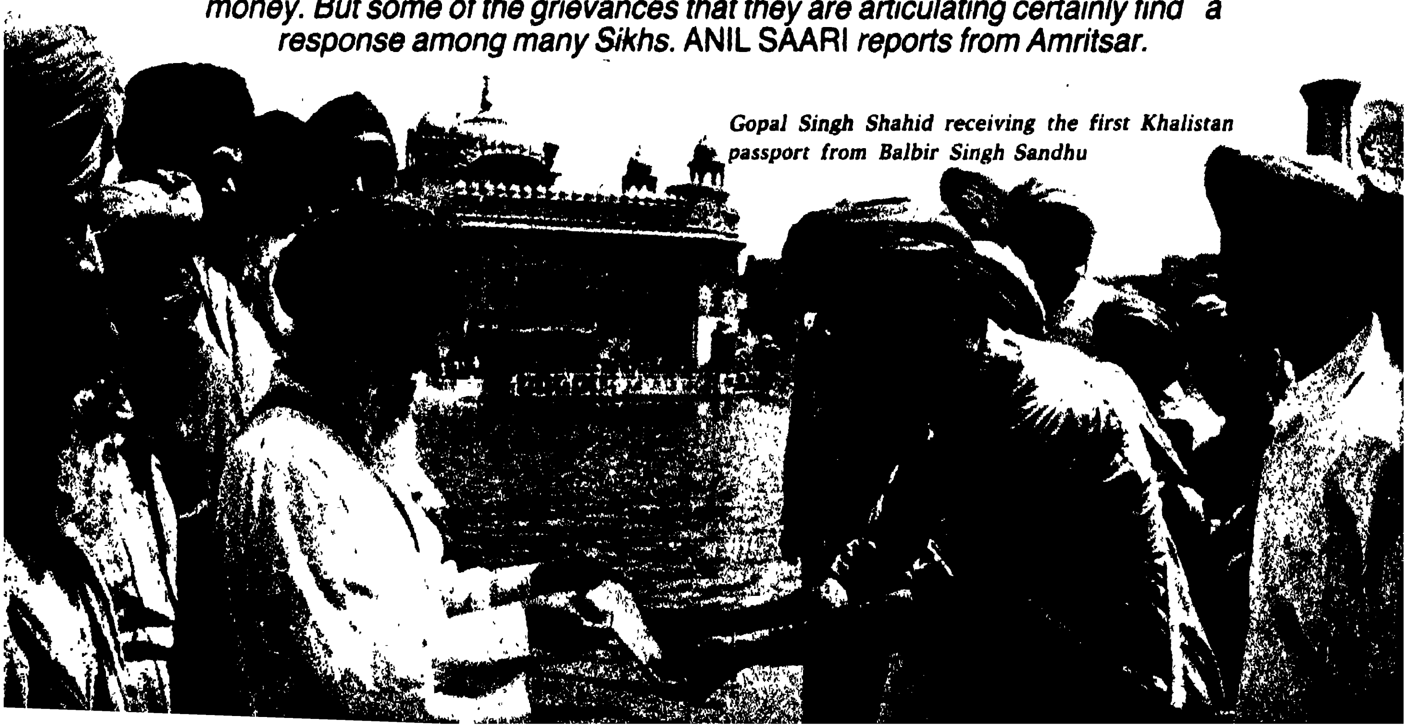
Some Sikh leaders, whose dreams are out of proportion to their following, have decided to again raise a forgotten cry—they are demanding a "nation" for Sikhs. Even Akali leader Prakash Singh Badal has condemned this demand for Khalistan (The Pure Land) as a gimmick inspired by foreign money. But some of the grievances that they are articulating certainly find a response among many Sikhs. ANIL SAARI *reports from Amritsar.*

Suddenly, we began hearing a demand which we had thought was all but forgotten—the demand for another nation out of this complex gathering of peoples called India. And this time, the Sikhs were taking up the cry. On the face of it, this was surprising, since the Sikhs of Punjab are surely the most prosperous community in the country today. If anyone wants to see success in independent India, all he has to do is go to the Punjab. But that is the paradox. It is success which has set the Sikh thinking.

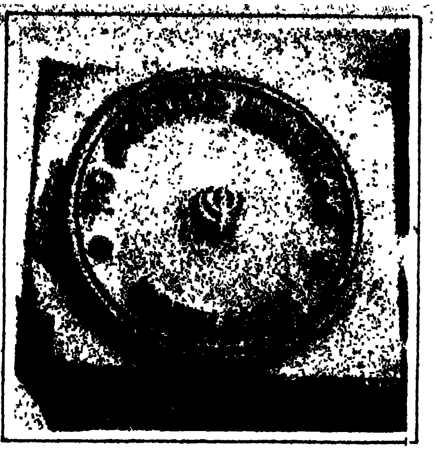
In the Punjab the Sikh is caught in a most unusual schizophrenia. He is only too aware of his economic strength and prosperity, but he also suffers from a persecution complex—that the government at Delhi does not want the Punjab, and the Sikh in particular, to assert his identity on the national scene. All sorts of arguments, many reeking of exaggeration, are given to assert this. "We produce 16% of India's cotton and consume only 3-4% of it," said Akali Dal (Sant group) worker Gurmeet Singh Cheema to SUNDAY at Amritsar, "but no new licences for big textile industries have been given to the Punjab because the capitalists of Gujarat and Maharashtra are sitting on top of the Indian government's head." Cheema, who was general secretary of the Sikh Students and Youth Federation from 1973 to 1976, articulated another commonly felt complaint of the Sikhs when he added, "*Unki state ko khushal karne ke liye hamari gardan par angutha lagaya rakhe hain. Punjab ko kachhe maal ki mandi samaj rakha hai* (To keep other states prosperous our neck is being choked. Punjab is just considered a source for raw materials)."

Such economic issues are enmeshed with even more complicated religious sentiments in the Sikh mind. Even though Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab have close personal, often family ties, there is a marked sense of conflict between the two communities. The reasons, obviously, lie as much in the past as the present. Take the example of Sardar Narendrajit Singh who heads the information bureau at the Golden Temple, Amritsar. He told SUNDAY, "My mother's brothers are Hindus. They are very nice on the individual level but when it comes to the collective level things are different. The conflict between the Sikhs and the Hindus begins from 1954 when the Hindu Code Bill described the Sikhs as a sect of Hinduism. We are not a sect; we are a separate *qaum.*" And, therefore, the Sikhs want a separate personal law and a separate law for inheritance, just as the Indian Muslims, Christians, Parsees and the other minorities have. Only too conscious of their militant history, the Sikhs refer to their own law book *Prem Ashram,* which was enunciated during the time of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh.

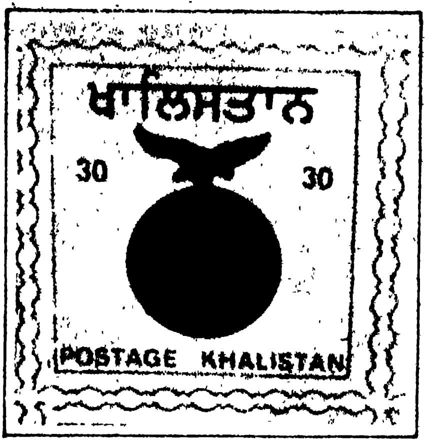
This feeling of alienation inevitably leads to a desire for greater autonomy for the Punjab. Sikhs feel very strongly



Gopal Singh Shahid receiving the first Khalistan passport from Balbir Singh Sandhu



The Khalistan seal



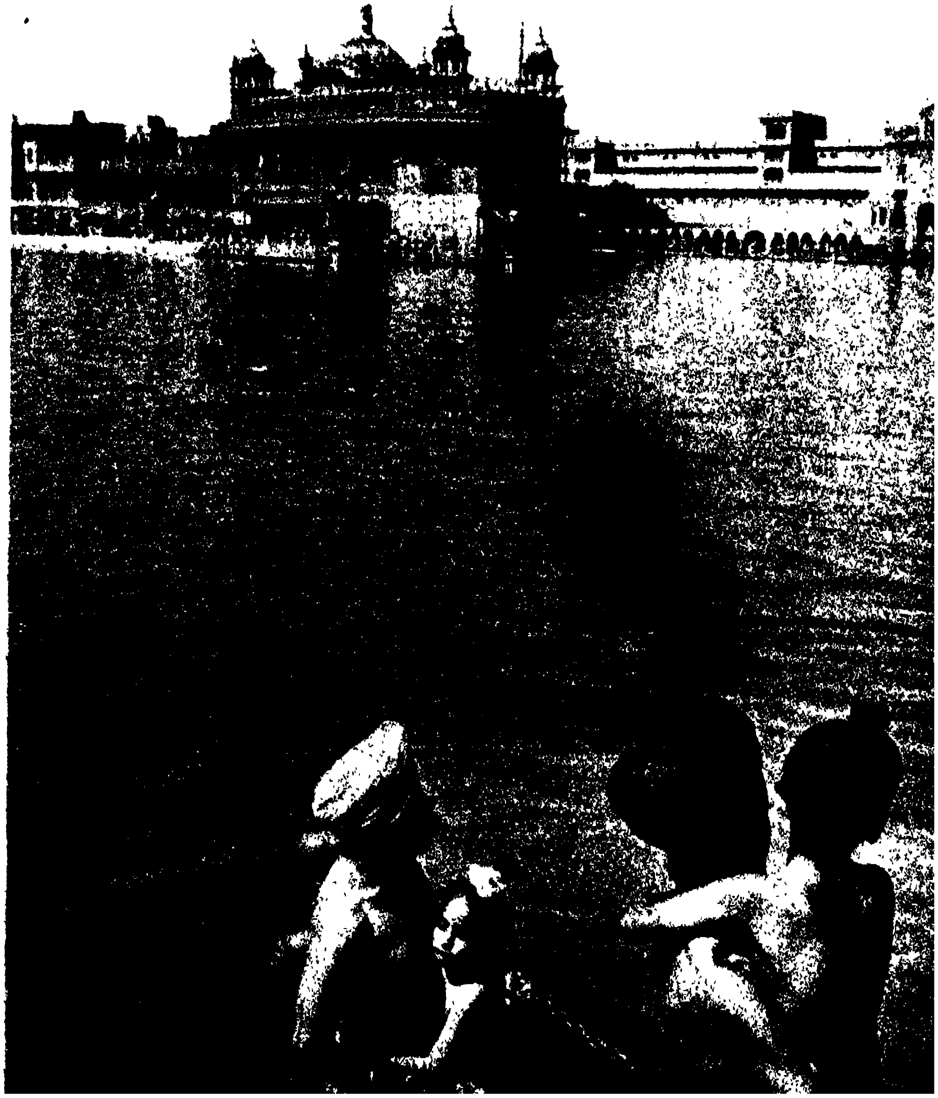
The Khalistan postal stamp

about the 1973 Ananthpur Sahib resolution which wanted more rights for the states and a more ostensible federal set-up in the Indian polity. There is a village in the Punjab, point out Akali Dal (Sant) workers called *Kuttiyanwali* (which means literally, 'the village of the bitch'). Even this name, pointed out an Akali worker sitting in the Amritsar party office on *Baisakhi* Day, 13 April, "cannot be changed by the Punjab government. The question of a state's rights becomes crucial in the Punjab. We are a prosperous state, a hard working people; the land is good. There are so many Punjabis settled abroad—you know, we demanded that there should not be any customs duty on the import of agricultural machinery but they (at New Delhi) said no!"

Against this background seething with complaints, some real and some imaginary but all stirring up the Pandora box in the Sikh psyche, a few politicians decided in March this year to officially demand a fresh status for the Sikhs. Four different positions on this issue have been taken up by a variety of Sikh leaders (apart, of course, from the complete negation of the Sikh nationhood concept by the Congress-I Sikh leaders). At the radical extreme is the slogan for 'Khalistan,' a separate sovereign country for the Sikhs, which has been raised by a handful of Sikh politicians such as Dr Jagjit Singh, who lives in England and is the self-styled president of the National Council of Khalistan, and Mr Balbir Singh Sandhu, the secretary-general of the NCK. The second position also extreme, has been taken by the Akali Dal splinter group headed by Mr Jagdev Singh Talwandi. At a World Sikh Convention organised at Ananthpur Sahib on *Baisakhi,* 13 April, which was also attended by the leader of the Nihang martial order and (most interestingly) the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, the Talwandi faction demanded a *Des Khalsa* (Sikh land) with a seat at the United Nations. However, *Des Khalsa* would not be a completely separate country, but would enjoy autonomy within the Indian framework, vesting only four departments—defence, external affairs, communications and currency—with the Indian government at New Delhi.

The other two positions have been taken by leaders within the Akali Dal (Sant) party which, with 56 members in the 112-seat Punjab Assembly, retains its status as the major platform of the Sikh community in the Punjab. On the one hand, militants like Mr G. S. Tohra, president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, speak angrily about the need for a separate Sikh identity (nationhood); indeed, in the last week of March, a resolution was passed by the SGPC declaring the Sikhs to be a separate nation. On the other hand, the moderates, led by former Punjab chief minister Prakash Singh Badal, have taken a stand against this demand. And apparently, they have won the party debate inasmuch as the Akali Dal (Sant) has come out unequivocally against associating itself with the demand for Khalistan. This was made abundantly clear through a series of public statements by the party leaders between 13-15 April, during which period Mr Badal also had a meeting with Sant Harichand Singh Longowal, the party leader, at the latter's native village.

The Akalis of the Sant group have in fact interpreted the sudden rash of calls for separation in a most interesting way. They are saying that such talk is, in fact, by the Congress(I) itself, in order to keep both the Sikhs and the Akalis divided. Mr Talwandi's breakaway Akali faction, they maintain, is secretly pro-Congress(I), and it is on the behest of certain senior Congress(I) leaders that it has begun this "war." The Congress(I), of course, has formally and officially condemned this movement, but apparently Mr Badal



The Darbar Sahib *and the* Akal Takht *at the Golden Temple*

"In Khalistan we will have everything"

The chief of operations of the Khalistan movement at Amritsar is Balbir Singh Sandhu (49). A former activist of the Bharat Sewak Samaj, he appears to be just one more Indian politician with dreams in total disproportion to his actual following, which seems minimal. On 13 April 1981, after Sandhu had issued the first Khalistan passport to his 33-year-old follower Gopal Singh Shahid, he told SUNDAY *(in his room no.32 of the hostel attached to the Golden Temple, Amritsar) that he and his associates had seized the hostel room despite the wishes of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee which manages the Golden Temple, and the gurdwara buildings adjacent to it. Another prominent Khalistan protagonist present at the interview was the Babbar Akali, Sardar Ram Singh Tihara, an ageing political activist whose eyes shone with pride when Sandhu said that Tihara has played a major role in fighting for the cause of a separate Sikh homeland.*

Sandhu claims to have made the first announcement of a separate Sikh homeland over the small transmitter that they had forcibly installed at the Golden Temple, for a brief while, in 1979. He and Tihara were among the small group of Khalistan activists who sent Ujagar Singh Randhawa and Master Hazara Singh Chakmisri Khan across the border into Pakistan on 8 April as emissaries of the National Council of Khalistan.

Q: How did Dr Jagjit Singh and you first get the idea of Khalistan?

A: This is not our idea. This idea originates from Guru Gobind Singh's establishment of the Khalsa Panth to protect the independence of the Khalsa *raj*. Actually, this idea started with Guru Nanak himself. The Khalsa *raj* was established only after a protracted struggle. Then the English came. The Sikh *qaum* (people or nation) fought in the Independence movement. From that time onwards the three-nation theory came up—the Hindu, the Muslim and the Sikh nations. The English rulers wanted that just as the Muslims asked for Pakistan, the Sikhs too should have their own land. The Congress leadership at that time made promises to the then Sikh leaders,especially to Master Tara Singh. But the Sikh leadership of that time was trapped in the web woven by the Congress and could not do anything. They believed that after Independence Nehru would give the Sikhs an area in the north-western region where the Sikh people could live according to their religion and their cultural traditions.

Till the creation of Pakistan this (Congress) leadership assured the Sikh leadership that no injustice would be done to them in independent India. But immediately after Independence, the Sikh *quam* was attacked. A circular was issued to deputy commissioners all over the country (at the behest of Sardar Patel and Nehru) in which it was said that the Sikhs are *Jaraim Pesha* (criminal tribe). This circular was shown to Master Tara Singh by Sardar Kapoor Singh, deputy commissioner in Hoshiarpur district. These are all mentioned in S. Kapoor Singh's book *Saachi Sakhi*.

We don't have any quarrel with Pakistan; it is India that has problems with Pakistan and it makes Punjab the battleground.

Q: Can the demand for Khalistan lead to a violent confrontation?

A: *Larai hogi. Aaj na hogi to kal hogi. Sab kuch jo nikalta hai, larai se hi* (there will be a war, if not today then in the near future. It is only from a struggle that something emerges). We want the government to stop fooling around with the Sikh's dignity.

Q: What are your complaints against the rest of India?

A: From the Punjab of 1947 the Punjabi-speaking areas of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana have been taken away. Chandigarh is now a union territory. The future of the districts of Fazilka and Abhor is still undecided. The Bhakra complex has also been taken away. The control of the headworks of the canals is not under Punjab anymore but under the centre. In Khalistan we will have everything. People will come and beg us to trade our wheat for arms, big factories and other materials. We will set up heavy industries in collaboration with other countries. Punjab will be a golden land, an ocean of wheat. We will prove everybody wrong who says that small nations face problems.

Take the example of Pakistan. We don't have any quarrel with that country: it is India that has problems with Pakistan and it makes Punjab the battleground. Why do they fight in Punjab, why not in Rajasthan?

Q: Your complaints do not seem significant enough for you to demand a separate state outside India.

A: India is not one country; it is a sub-continent. Prosperity, high educational standards, a good economic situation—these are possible only if Assam belongs to the Assamese, Bengal to the Bengalis and so on. And this land of ours will be called Khalistan, and it will be for Sikhs, because the Sikhs have to preserve their history.

Q: Who do you think are your biggest enemies in India?

A: The Communists, the Jana Sanghis, the government and Akalis like Prakash Singh Badal, Rabi Inder Singh, Balwant Singh and Atma Singh, who run away from fighting.

Balbir Singh Sandhu, secretary-general of National Council of Khalistan

(and, in turn, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee) is less than convinced. According to a report in *The Hindustan Times* (14 April) Mr Badal said at a public meeting at Jaitu the previous day that the "demand for Khalistan or a separate Sikh state is being raised by interested parties, including a few touts of foreign countries, only to create disunity among the Sikhs. Our demand is only for more powers to the states and not for a separate state."

The Khalistan movement scenario certainly looks very dubious. On 13 April, on the auspicious *Baisakhi* Day which has great significance for the Punjabi farmer, the secretary-general of the National Council of Khalistan, Mr Balbir Singh Sandhu, released the first "passport" of Khalistan in a fairly shabby farce. There were only two or three associates of Mr Sandhu present at the "passport ceremony," and he gave the passport to his own lieutenant, Mr Gopal Singh Shahid. Since the ceremony was taking place in the courtyard outside the *Darbar Sahib* at the Golden Temple, Amritsar, on *Baisakhi*, when Sikh pilgrims come in hundreds of thousands to the *gurdwara*, Mr Sandhu's mock-ceremony did manage to attract an audience of some 20 people. However, the main participants in the event were three press photographers, three newsmen and at least three cops of the Punjab CID. The CID men were more anxious to know what the journalists present had to say and made no attempt at all to stop Sandhu from releasing the first "Khalistan passport" to Mr Shahid. Instead, the inaction of the authorities seemed to give some credence to the Akali Dal (Sant) charges that the Khalistan movement was a political stunt inspired by the Congress(I) and that the "Khalistan secretary-general" has long been an operator for Mr Darbara Singh, the chief minister of Punjab.

It is quite true that Mr Sandhu has strong links with the Congress party. Forty nine years old, hailing from Tarn Taran, he was a teacher for eight years at the Guru Arjan Dev Khalsa School, Amritsar, before he joined the Bharat Sewak Samaj, which had always drawn support from senior Congress leaders at Delhi and of which Mr Gulzarilal Nanda, was once the head. Mr Sandhu told SUNDAY at Amritsar on 13 April that he had been "specially called" to join the BSS by Mr Gurdial Singh Dhillon, the Congress(I) leader who has been the speaker of the Lok Sabha and who was recently appointed by Mrs Indira Gandhi's government as the Indian High Commissioner in Canada.

Mr Sandhu has been principal of the Panchayati Raj Training Centre at Jullunder. After the centre closed down in 1968, he happened to meet, once again, Dr Jagjit Singh, the self-styled president of the National Council of Khalistan. Mr Sandhu told SUNDAY that "It was in 1968 that we started discussing the Khalistan movement and we decided to share the responsibilities in this regard. Dr Jagjit Singh went to England and started to shoulder the work there, and we kept the idea of Khalistan alive here. Dr Jagjit Singh, who was finance minister in Punjab in 1967, returned to India when the Janata was in power and we established the Shiromani Akali Dal Inquilabi Khalistan."

Dr Jagjit Singh and Mr Sandhu had, in the second half of 1979, also been involved in the well-reported attempt to instal a radio transmitter at the Golden Temple, Amritsar. The effort failed because the centre intervened to stop this. Mr Sandhu exclaimed that it was "an act of religious injustice" not to allow a radio-transmitter to broadcast religious programmes from the Golden Temple: "The *Darbar Sahib* is a central religious place. Leave aside political, economic and social rights, the Sikhs don't even have religious rights! Do you know that in the *kirtan* (devotional songs) sung at the *Darbar Sahib* you cannot even say on the pick-up system *'ab phalan raagi kirtan karega'* or *'phalan granthi Shri Guru Sahib ka vaak lega'* ('Now such-and-such singer will recite hymns' or 'So-and-so will read the directions of the Guru Sahib '). At the moment only the *kirtan* can be done on amplifiers. We wanted a powered transmitter to send the message of the *kirtans* to

The Ganga Singh Dhillon factor

The Khalistan and *Des Khalsa* agitations launched by a small group of Sikh leaders also had ramifications on the infighting within the Congress(I). AICC general secretary, Kalpnath Rai, who is in charge of party affairs in the Punjab wrote to Mrs Indira Gandhi a very critical note on the Punjab Congress(I) chief minister Darbara Singh's handling of the agitation. This letter was "scooped" out by *The Tribune's* chief of bureau at Delhi, Satindra Singh, and *The Tribune* published what it said was the full text of Kalpnath Rai's letter to Mrs Indira Gandhi on 15 April. The letter says:

"One Ganga Singh Dhillon had come from the USA to attend the Sikh Educational Conference (organised by the Chief Khalsa Diwan). He later went to see the Pakistan President also. I have been told by well-informed persons that Mr Dhillon, besides having his business interests in the USA, is being financed by the CIA and Pakistan...You would not have found a single district Congress(I) Committee in Punjab or Pradesh Congress(I) Committee holding any meeting—public or private—and passing any resolution countering this move...This is the state of affairs of our organisation's functioning in Punjab. I have also brought it to your notice that the Punjab Congress(I) has become absolutely defunct. Mr Darbara Singh, who is also the president of the Punjab Congress(I) has no time for the organisation. Unless it (Khalistan demand) is countered on the political level, it will create more complications and we may have to face a situation worse than that prevailing in the north-eastern region. As a general-secretary of the party looking after the Punjab affairs, I am much disturbed to see what is happening in the state. I can assure you that Mr Darbara Singh, on his own, will never resign the presidentship of the party and would make every attempt to hold the dual charge. It is in the interest of the party and the state that he should be bluntly told either he should remain as chief minister or pradesh Congress(I) president."

Whether Kalpnath Rai's letter to Mrs Gandhi is directly connected with the reported Zail Singh-Darbara Singh infighting or not is another matter. Kalpnath Rai tacitly confirmed to SUNDAY on 20 April at New Delhi that the letter by him quoted in *The Tribune* is not misquoting him.

Initially, he refused to talk about the letter, saying that it was a confidential letter he had written to Mrs Indira Gandhi and that he did not understand how some portions of it had been printed in a section of the press. At this stage of our interview Mr Kalpnath Rai also called an aide and grilled him for a few minutes about the 'news leak.'

In his interview with SUNDAY Kalpnath Rai reiterated much of what was published in *The Tribune* and added that because the whole region from Afghanistan to Iran to the Middle East was tension-ridden at the moment, "the forces of treason and national disintegration which are raising their head at such a time cannot be ignored." He also referred to the Akali Dal (Talwandi) demand for UN membership for a Sikh nation, at the conference at Ananthpur Sahib on 13 April 1981 at which the Jama Masjid Imam of Delhi was also present. "As a student of politics," he added, "I understand these circumstances," and he implied that the "separate Sikh nation theory" was being floated to weaken Mrs Gandhi: *"Shrimati Indira Gandhi ko kamzor karne ke piche videshi taaqaton ka haath hai* (foreign powers are trying to weaken Mrs Indira Gandhi). Behind the demand for Khalistan and the Sikh nation are certain foreign forces. To fight them the Congress(I) party should be strengthened."

Sikhs all over the world."

However, according to Mr Sandhu's Akali opponents, the transmitter they took inside the *Darbar Sahib* in 1979 was, in the words of the SGPC information officer, "only a small box which had a range of 18 yards. You could call it a child's toy," implying that the transmitter episode was but another gimmick. In any case the law of the country forbids unlicensed, private broadcasting. The workers of the Akali Dal (Sant) also believe that the Khalistan slogans and the Talwandi faction's movement for a "Sikh region" within the Indian federation are meant primarily to confuse the following of the Akali Dal (Sant) and to sow seeds of discord within the party leadership. "Such slogans," said a middle-ranking Akali Dal (Sant) leader, "may not influence people in the towns but it is meant to rouse the sentiments of people in the villages. Talwandi (referring to Mr Jagdev Singh Talwandi, leader of the breakaway Akali Dal group) lost his reputation after he left the Akali Dal and helped topple our government. He is now trying to win support by his present actions."

Irrespective of the claim that Talwandi's movement is a sign of desperation, the talk of Khalistan and of Sikh autonomy has once again set at least some Sikhs aflame, bringing alive the memories of the Sikhs' historical struggle for independence from Delhi. In private, even Akali Dal (Sant) workers admit that this *chingari* (spark) of Khalistan can become dangerous in the future. In popular Sikh folklore there is an array of proud wars and martyrdoms that the common Sikh will easily quote. It is a history that throbs just below the skin of the Sikh in the Punjab; the past and the present merge and make him tense and angry as he argues about "economic and religious injustices" against the Sikh people today. The worst fate, therefore, that can befall any Sikh leader today is to become known as a coward, or a *buzdil*. It will be a sad day if the moderation of the Badals becomes synonymous, in the Sikh mind, with cowardice.

In 1947, said Mr Harcharan Singh Hudira, the former vice-president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and of the Shiromani Akali Dal, and who as a schoolboy took part in the 1920 campaign to liberate the *gurdwaras* from the hold of the Hindu priests: "The British were willing to accept the Sikhs, along with the Hindus and the Muslims, as a separate nation. But Gandhiji appealed to the Sikhs and said that the laws of the land would be made only with the approval of the Sikhs. This implied that we are the third *qaum* (nation). In the Constituent Assembly, our representatives protested about those rules that were not accepted by us. After Independence, when we talked about these laws, Nehru told Giani Singh that the situation had changed. This meant that then they needed us but

"Every evening the prayer ends with 'Raj karega khalsa'"

Khushwant Singh, in addition to being editor of The Hindustan Times, *is an authority on Sikh history. He discussed the demand for Khalistan with* Anil Saari.

Q: One feels that the Sikh is very angry about something today. Why is that?

A: It is purely a minority complex. Today, every minority has learnt the political game that unless they nurture some grievances they cannot register their point of view with the government. But in the case of the Sikhs it is a minority with such a great difference that it hardly qualifies as a minority as such. The Sikhs with their own strength have obtained more privileges for themselves than the majority itself enjoys. The Sikhs are the richest community in the country, I think, next to the Parsees, who are such a small number. Nobody really dare discriminate against the Sikhs: there are more Sikhs in the defence forces than from any other community in proportion to their population. I think there are over 10% Sikhs in the defence forces, although they form only about 2% of the Indian population. They are also on the most sensitive border, the border with Pakistan, and I think both the Indian government and the Pakistani government are aware of this—you should listen to Radio Pakistan when it is beamed towards the Sikhs; they really try to pander to them. I would totally discount Akali pretensions of minority discrimination against the Sikhs. I would rather put it that it is a discrimination in their (the Sikhs') favour.

Q: Then why do the Sikhs seem to suffer from a persecution complex?

A: What is really the crux of the situation, what is the real danger which the Sikhs are unwilling to accept and which I have been telling them for years, is that of their merging back into Hinduism, just as happened with Jainism. There is really no social or religious barrier between the Sikhs and the Hindus except the *khalsa* identity—keeping long hair and not shaving the beard. Sikhism is really in effect a "bearded" Hinduism in the Punjab. The Sikhs and the Hindus observe the same festivals. They intermarry, Hindus worship in Sikh temples. You go to any *gurdwara* (at Delhi) in the morning and you will see that one-quarter of the people there are Hindus. There are many Punjabi Hindus who believe in monotheism—which is the crux of Sikhism—and there are many who believe in the casteless society that is preached by Sikhism. Basically, the Sikh is different only in the *khalsa* form. As soon as a Sikh cuts his hair and shaves his beard he becomes a Hindu believing in Sikhism.

Q: Do the Sikhs today really practise castelessness?

A: No. The Sikhs today are as subject to the caste system as the Hindus. There are three major caste groups. There are the jat Sikhs who comprise 60% of the Sikh population. Then, the brahmin, kshatriya and vaish Sikhs, who are known as the non-Jat Sikhs. And then there are the harijan Sikhs, who are known as the mazhabi Sikhs. There are hardly any instances of inter-caste marriages. Generally they prefer marriages within the same community, but a Jat Sikh would prefer to marry a Jat Hindu than a Sikh from outside his own caste.

Take the example of Master Tara Singh; he was a khatri, his caste name was Malhotra. He could never get a government position. All the Sikh chief ministers, cabinet ministers, governors and so on have been Jat Sikhs except for Giani Zail Singh (union home minister) who is a ramgarhiya Sikh.

Q: To what do you attribute his success?

A: I would say largely his own shrewdness, and Mrs Indira Gandhi's strong backing. His rise has caused enormous resentment against him, and the Jats always refer to him as a "tarkhan (carpenter)."

Q: Do you think that the Punjab Sikh's psychological problem today is that he is bursting with energy in a very dynamic corner of the country, and he feels that the rest of the country is static?

A: No. The only rational basis for a grievance that the Sikhs may nuture is that they feel that they contribute much more to the country than they get back themselves. There are no heavy industries in the Punjab; there is a shortage of power. The central government has refused to help their project on the

I think the demand for Khalistan is suicidal and is the work of irresponsible mischief-makers

Theim Dam (which is coming up slowly beyond Ropar). The Punjab government started working on it when Badal was CM. Not having financial support from the centre slows the work. You'll soon see that the Bhakra is incapable of sending any power to the Punjab. Then there is the question of Chandigarh, of the contiguous areas along Punjab. But I don't think these are real issues, particularly because if these contiguous areas (such as Ganganagar and the Kangra valley) are joined to the Punjab, the Sikhs would become a minority in the Punjab.

Q: Do you think that the Sikh has too intense a memory of a lost empire?

A: So have the Marathas lost an empire, so have the Muslims. What is the point of harping about what was in the past? Well, if they have such a memory, let them capture Lahore; after all, that was the Punjab that made up Maharajah Ranjit Singh's kingdom.

Q: The slogan of a separate Sikh homeland has never really died out.

A: It is kept alive every evening. Every evening the prayer of the Sikh ends with the words "*Raj karega khalsa* (The Sikhs will rule, one day)." Why only the evening prayers, these words are said at the end of every prayer by the Sikhs: "*Raj karega khalsa, aki rahe na hoye* (The *khalsa* will rule, one day, and nobody will be able to stand against him)." And the third line says something to the effect that those who seek refuge with Sikhs will be saved.

Khushwant Singh

Q: Do you think that if the Sikhs had their own personal law and their own inheritance law, they would feel satisfied that their social identity had been preserved?

A: There is no other law. The only thing which the Sikhs have a different law for, is marriage. There is the Ananths Marriage Act. Unlike the Hindus who go round the fire seven times for a marriage to be finalised, we go round the Granth Sahib four times. This Act was brought in much, much later to validate the Sikh form of marriage Otherwise, it has always been the same law as the Hindus. Nobody representing any Sikh opinion has ever talked about Sikh laws. The only unique institution we have is the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, which is an elected body and is like a mini-Sikh Parliament. It is in the SGPC that the Hindu does not have a say, he does not have a vote. It does not matter if a Sikh has cut his hair and is cleanshaven; as long as he is registered as a Sikh he can vote in the SGPC. The SGPC enjoys enormous powers and its budget runs into crores. It manages the *gurdwaras,* schools and hospitals and its power of patronage is enormous.

Q: What do you feel about the fact that some of the protagonists of Sikh separatism live abroad?

A: They are mischief-makers because I think the demand for Khalistan is suicidal and is the work of irresponsible mischief-makers. They don't live here, and do not know what damage they will do the community. 20% of the Sikhs live outside the area that they would include in Khalistan. The logical repercussion of their mischief will be another Pakistan.

Q: Do you think the Sikh problem is that the people of the Punjab have had to face invaders from outside from time immemorial, and now that there is no invader threatening him he fantasises the invader in his own psyche?

A: I'm not sure. Sikh history is very brief. The militant part of this history started only around 1700 AD and within a 100 years they dominated the whole of the Punjab. They were all Hindus who were converted to Sikhism. Take Banda Bahadur, who is known as Bande Bairaagi before he was converted by Guru Govind Singh himself. He was one of the Guru's generals and was a khatri hailing from Jammu and Kashmir. He ransacked the area right up to Delhi within two or three years of Auranzeb's death. There were so many Hindu people in the area whom he united, and they were all rising against the Mughals.

Arrests...will make martyrs of people who don't deserve to be martyrs in the first place

Q: But could not there be any psychological motivations about the ghosts of invaders?

A: How many invaders did they stop in the first place? All this kind of mind-reading of history can go on and on. After all, the Punjabi khatris are supposed to be kshatriyas, but most of them are traders. The Jats have been the really militant people in the area. Then some of the most famous of the Sikh regiments have been those of mazhabi (harijan) Sikhs. None of these caste things really apply. I don't think the invader-complex is there at all in the Sikh psyche.

Q: Do you think the Khalistan slogan will fizzle out?

A: I have no doubt that it will fizzle out, but it is capable of dangerous consequences if it is treated hamhandedly. This talk of using the National Security Act to arrest people; it will make martyrs of people who don't deserve to be martyrs in the first place. I think this ought to be fought on the political level and by the Sikhs themselves. The rational element within the Sikh community has to be warned against the danger. If the government goes about arresting people it will get a major movement on its hands.

Q: In the Punjab, the Sikh is over-conscious of his history.

A: It is a spectacular history. Take any aspect of it: a tiny little minority that dominated the whole area; the first people in one thousand years to roll back the invaders and to take back the land that was supposed to belong to these people. Sikh troops have been marched through the streets of Kabul, carrying the Sikh flag. Then, more Sikhs went to the gallows in the freedom movement than any other people. There is a pride in the Sikh, and one-upmanship is inculcated in him. He believes that one *khalsa* is equal to "*sava lakh* (one hundred and twenty-five thousand)" people, that one Sikh is an army in himself. This one-upmanship has stood him in good stead. You know the really good agricultural land in the Punjab was supposed to be in the west, which is now in Pakistan. Now in the Punjab, the Sikh peasant produces almost double the crop per acre than the Pakistani farmer produces in the old area. So there is reason for a Sikh to be immodest, and he is by nature not a modest person.

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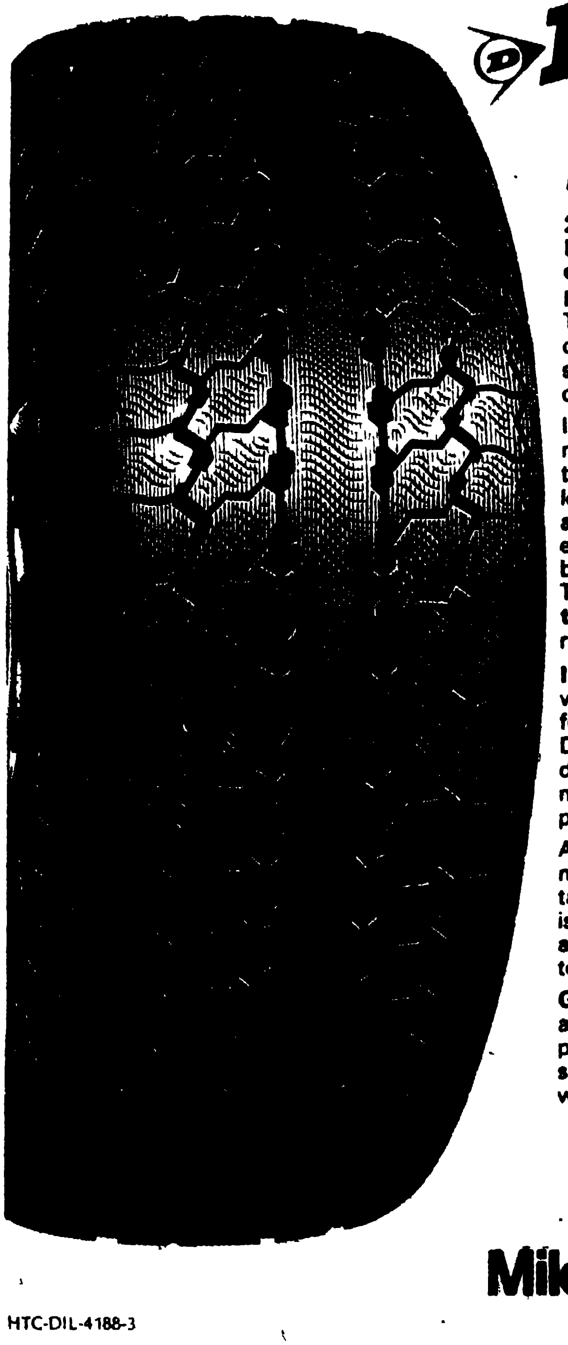

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Baisakhi at the Golden Temple in Amritsar

The Akali Parliament–the seat of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee

Now they did not. You know, from 1947 we had been wanting only a Punjabi *suba* (a Punjabi province)—*aisa desh ka gharna jisme Sikhi ka bol lala ho* (a state where the Sikhs dominate). Master Tara Singh launched the Punjabi *suba* movement in the Sixties only because he was tired of the Congress. We also fought for Independence, but after we gave them freedom they have turned their eyes away."

The Punjabi Sikh's memory of his independent identity goes back to the great Sikh empire established by Maharajah Ranjit Singh, when the Punjab stretched from Peshawar in the north-west to Ladakh in the north-east, to Montgomery in the south and Delhi in the east, a Punjab that continued to exist on the same scale till 1947. Going back further, Sikh folklore evokes memories of the war of personal prestige and the clash of egos between Aurangzeb and Guru Gobind Singh, founder of the Khalsa panthic order. Aurangzeb had asked the tenth Guru to stop wearing the *kalgi* (plume symbolising kingship) on his turban and dissolve the army he had raised. In return, Aurangzeb promised peace and friendship. This was too high a price for peace, as far as the Sikhs were concerned, and Guru Gobind Singh told Aurangzeb: "You leave me alone and I will leave you alone."

A hundred years earlier, Guru Hargobind Singh, the sixth Guru, waged war with Jehangir. In 1625, two years before Jehangir's death, the Mughal *qazi* (governor) of Lahore told him that he could continue his preaching only if he stopped calling himself a Sikh and stopped converting people to Sikhism. Guru Hargobind Singh was the first of the Sikh Gurus to take up the *miri-piri*—the spiritual sword which was hung on the right and the temporal sword which was hung on the left, in the Punjab. This marked the metamorphosis of the Sikh religion and, later, when Shahjehan ascended the Mughal throne, the Sikhs defeated the Mughal army in three successive wars at Amritsar till Shahjehan sued for peace and explained that the wars had been instigated by his *qazi* at Lahore without Delhi's consent.

It is such a belief in a martial tradition which makes Sikhs ask why no Sikh has ever been made the commander-in-chief of the Indian army, though the Sikhs form an impressive chunk of the Indian armed forces? They ask why a Sikh has never been made Vice-President of India though the Sikhs are a minority too? They complain that the Sikh Gurdwara (Amendment) Bill that is in the process of becoming law is only meant to divide the Sikhs in the different provinces and will destroy the apex body control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee at Amritsar. They claim that the central government has, from this year, reduced Punjab's quota from 60 to 40 % of the Sikh pilgrims allowed annually to go to visit Sikh shrines in Pakistan—as a result of which the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee at Amritsar did not nominate any names for the pilgrimage this year, and that this April only 300 Sikhs from the Punjab went in a group of 3,000 pilgrims led by Mr Santokh Singh, the prominent Sikh leader in Delhi. They feel that the central government has never trusted them despite the patriotic fervour of the Punjab's Sikhs at times of war. Or why was it, they ask, that when the states were reorganised in the Fifties on a linguistic basis the central government did not grant the demand for a Punjabi *suba*?

But, above all, the dilemma of the Sikh in the Punjab seems to stem from the fact that, whereas the Punjab is the country's leading producer of foodgrains, whereas Punjab's industrial development, particularly in the small sector, has been considerable, whereas Punjab is among the most prosperous regions in the country, the Punjabi does not carry the same clout on the national political scene as states like UP and Maharashtra. The Punjab's Sikh sees himself as a man being denied a national status in proportion to his strength.

The Punjab's Sikh is in a perplexed mood, underscored by a persecution complex vis a vis the rest of the country. As the veteran Akali leader Harcharan Singh Hudira puts it: *"Sikh tang hai is waqat aur jis tarah kisi tang insaan ke shareer par phore idhar udhar ho jaate hain, usi tarah Khalistan bhi ek phora hai Punjab ke shareer par.* (The Sikh is unhappy today, and just as boils erupt here or there on an unhappy man's body, the slogan of Khalistan is a boil erupting on the body of Punjab)."

INDIA: MAFIA'S LATEST TARGET

Is India going to be the future hunting ground for the international gangs, collectively known as the Mafia? This is one question which has been haunting the authorities ever since the presence of a Mafia hitman was detected in the country sometime in December 1980. VINOD SHARMA and JAGMEET UPPAL investigate.

The microphone came to lite above the general din at the Delhi airport. "Attention please, Pan Am flight number...departing for Montreal is now ready for boarding. Passengers are requested to..." The voice had barely died down when passengers, waiting at the international lounge started moving towards the boarding counter. And then it happened: so fast that hardly anybody noticed it. A number of men closed in on a foreign couple who were making their way towards the counter. The couple, Mr Joseph Frenna, an American and Ms Michelle Marcoux, a Canadian, were ushered into a small room, and even before they could protest, identity cards were produced. The men belonged to the narcotics division of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI). They had nabbed the couple on 21 June 1980.

The DRI had earlier received information about the couple and had sent some of its officers to apprehend them. However, a thorough search did not yield anything. Even the false bottom of the crutches that Mr Frenna was using—the American is a victim of poliomyelitis—was empty. As the officers somewhat nonplussed, waited, a few other officers brought in an Indian, Walter Herrison. Herrison was found moving nervously near the Pam Am booth, shortly after the couple was taken in. Some vigilant DRI men saw his suspicious movements and brought him in for interrogation. Mr Herrison cracked under pressure and confessed that the blue bag he was carrying was given him by the couple. The bag yielded 860 gms of heroin, stuffed in condoms, worth Rs 4 lakhs in the international market.

Perhaps for the first time, the DRI had succeeded in apprehending three people, all of whom were connected with the international Mafia. The three were chargesheeted and the case went to court. It looked like the high drama was all over, when suddenly, in December, the Canadian High Commission in India came out with the news that Joseph Faoud Elyas, a 45-year-old Egyptian and suspected Mafia hitman, was in the capital. Details concerning Faoud were sought from Interpol. It was found that Faoud had arrived from Cairo on 20 October 1980, almost four months after the incident at Palam airport. Reports indicated that his target was none other than Herrison, a key witness to the heroin smuggling case. Before arriving in Delhi, Faoud had reportedly accepted US $ 50,000 as payment for silencing Herrison. The fact that Herrison was present at a meeting between Frenna and Raynold Des Jerdin, a Mafia kingpin, at a hotel in Delhi in July 1980, made him a prime target for the killer. Further, Jerdin had been arrested in a case of drug-smuggling in Canada, and it was feared by the Mafia, that any statement made by Herrison before an Indian court would result in Jerdin's conviction. However, despite the Mafia conspiracy, Herrison managed to elude them and is still alive. Meanwhile in an attempt to arrest him, the Delhi intelligence officers were getting too close for the comfort of Faoud. The hitman decided to leave the country and managed to slip past vigilant intelligence officers in a British Airways plane.

Joseph Faoud Elyas

Till the time of writing, Ms Marcoux has been releasd on bail. She is still in India, but rather wary of meeting visitors lest she be convicted again. Frenna, is still in Tihar Jail and his plea to the Supreme Court to reduce the bail amount from Rs 1 lakh has been turned down. Herrison, a taxidriver is still at large.

As the arrests of the drug-smugglers proved, the Mafia is indeed trying to gain a base in India. This suspicion is strengthened by the fact that about eight or ten top smugglers held a secret conclave at a five-star hotel in Bombay in the summer of 1980. Intelligence reports indicate that the meeting discussed "ways and means" of exploiting the Indian resources for pursuing the illicit narcotics trade. The top smugglers could not be nabbed by the police because the Indian authorities had no tangible evidence. As a highly placed source later said: "The bigwigs merely patronise the trade. They operate in the garb of respectability."

It is well known to the law enforcement agencies that India has, for a long time, been used as a "transit point" for opium and opiate smuggling. A bumper poppy harvest this year in the infamous Golden Triangle—Thailand, Burma, and Laos—is expected to further boost the flow of traffic through Indian soil.

India has the potential of becoming an important nation on the Mafia map in view of the increased opium production from the Golden Triangle in 1981. Moreover, the stringent laws enforced to curb the trafficking of drugs through the Southeast Asian network, including the three borders of the countries of the Golden Triangle, heighten the possibility of India becoming a major transit point for the drugs.

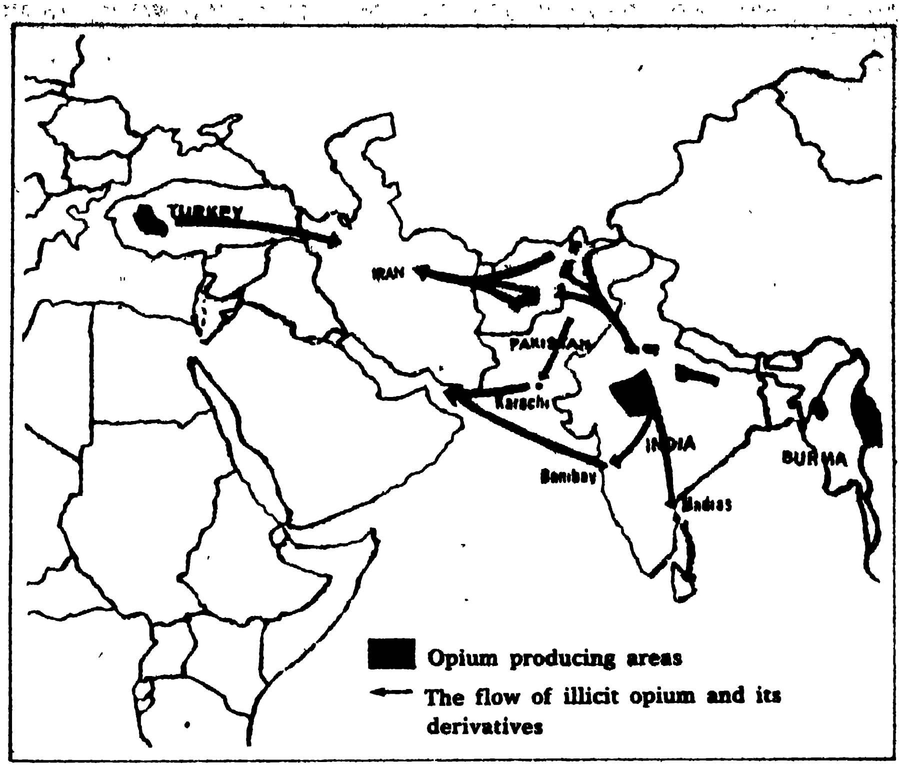
Southeast Asian nations like Thailand, Singapore and Burma have introduced death penalties for drug offences. With the maxium penalty for such an offence in India being just three years imprisonment, it is definitely a much safer place for the drug-smugglers. The stringent laws in Singapore, which is not in the Golden Triangle but forms part of the South-east Asian network, have raised the possibilities of an increased drug traffic through India. This is more so as illicit opium imports from Thailand were distributed through Singapore to the United States and Australia. This included heroin, an opium derivative, produced at laboratories in Hong Kong and Bangkok.

Drug enforcement officials believe that a large quantity of illicit opium produced in the Golden Triangle was smuggled into India over land borders. In several cases the contraband was brought over land from Nepal, after being taken there by air from Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. Though the opium production in the Golden Triangle has been good this year, a series of bad crops and the crackdown on smugglers in the South-east Asian network had, to some extent, shifted the drug pipeline to the Golden Crescent—Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Mid-east South Asian illicit opium network is being used more often as several couriers operating in Southeast Asian countries have lost their lives due to the strict laws. One such case was reported from Singapore recently in which an Indian from Azamgarh, in Uttar Pradesh, was hanged after being caught with a small quantity of heroin. The authorities in New Delhi have asked the Indian embassy in Singapore to furnish the details of the case which necessitated such a drastic action.

India's importance in the Mid-east South Asian network seems to have increased following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, a Golden Crescent country. A large amount of opium produced in the Crescent found its way to European markets through India during the period. The Border Security Force, which mans the Indian borders, seized over one tonne of opium being smuggled from Pakistan in just four months last year.

Drug control agencies estimate that more than 25,000 tonnes of opium were smuggled every year from the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle to Europe and North America. A big chunk of this illicit stuff reportedly passes through India. Officials, who admitted that India's importance was growing as a transit country for drug smuggling, felt strongly about the inadequacy of anti-narcotic drives in the country. Even as drug smuggling operations in the country were burgeoning, the agencies responsible for controlling the anti-narcotic operations at the entry and exit points remained saddled with manpower shortage. The narcotics division of the DRI had just five officers for processing the plethora of information received from external sources and conducting field operations. Even the customs officials, who are a part of the DRI, are not able to pay specific attention to drug-smuggling at various entry and exit points as most of the staff are busy with routine checks.



The Gulf States-South Asian illicit opium network

As a result, customs checks are lax at the airports. A case which brought to the fore the "slack hand rein" at the airport was reported from Bombay recently. The Indian officials, despite knowing that a Montreal-bound couple was in possession of heroin, failed to make the seizure or prevent the couriers from boarding the flight from Santa Cruz airport. What added insult to injury was that the two couriers were caught eventually; not in India but at Montreal airport and that too on the basis of a message flashed from Bombay.

The latest technique adopted by the smugglers, in which the contraband is carried "internally," has posed additional problems for the officials. Lack of sophisticated equipment to detect the drugs and the apathy of the public, who start complaining if the customs officials take time in conducting the checks, have added to the existing problems.

A senior official pointed out that checks at various Indian airports continued to be conducted in a "primitive style" even as the smugglers were known to have adopted new techniques and methods for hiding the contraband. In the Bombay case, the couple had concealed the heroin-filled condoms in their private parts at a grave personal risk. They had concealed the condoms in their vital parts which could have burst anytime, causing instant death, the official said. The smugglers were prepared to take the risk as drug smuggling these days is a business more lucrative than smuggling gold. Heroin has a mark-up value of an estimated 3,000 per cent by the time it hits the New York and Toronto markets. Similarly, a kilogram of opium costing about ten thousand dollars in Bangkok can be sold for 40,000 dollars in the United States and Europe.

The international gangs involved in narcotics smuggling have shown ingenuity and enterprise in selecting the couriers, who are generally handicapped or with an appearance which does not immediately arouse suspicion. Even the techniques adopted in transporting the contraband are highly innovative and aimed at deceiving the authorities.

Besides carrying the drugs internally, fruits, battery cells, false bottoms of suitcases, perfume bottles and tyres are widely used for smuggling.

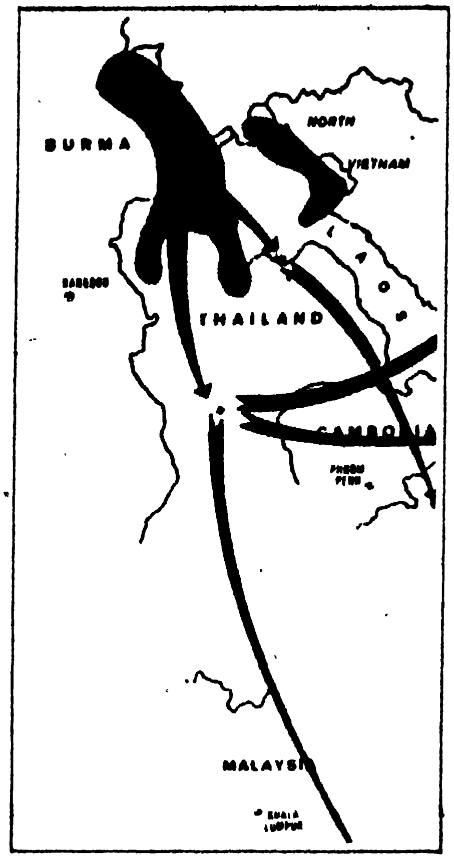
The frightening magnitude of the smuggling operations and the limits to which the peddlers can go to evade the law-enforcing agencies was amply proved in a recent case which led to the arrest of two Americans at Delhi airport. The Americans—Carey and Ice—were found in possession of 17 kilograms of hashish valued at a phenomenal three-and-a-lakh rupees in the international market. After being bailed out by a court, the accused suprisingly managed to slip out of India on the basis of forged documents. Checks with the United States embassy in New Delhi revealed that Carey's brother, who came to India after knowing of the arrest, managed to obtain a passport for himself on the plea that he had lost the original one. Having got the duplicate, the Carey brothers sneaked out of India with forged documents. Ice, meanwhile, left India on a British passport. A senior official involved in the investigations said Ice was acting as a courier despite his poor health. One of his legs was amputated and the other was awaiting amputation. The 72-year-old American was a chronic diabetic and always remained confined to a wheelchair. Despite his complete incapacitation, Ice probably took the risk in view of the fantastic profit margin involved in the business. The hashish he was smuggling could have fetched a fortune in a city like Chicago.

Whether or not the two Americans had links with the international Mafia has not yet been established. It was, however, certain that they worked as couriers for a well-organised gang as some days later they were arrested with 110 grammes of morphine at London's Heathrow airport.

The officials who narrated the incident, felt that the drugs recovered from the couriers did not originate from India. The contraband stuff was probably brought from some other country with India being merely a transit point.

These officials were of the view that India lacked the potential of becoming a big supply market for the international gangs. This was because the production of opium had dwindled from 1658 tonnes in 1978 to 933 tonnes last year. The projected production of illicit opium for the current year was around 850 tonnes. Strict government control over the production of opium had shown good results during the past several years. Illicit opium production in the country was negligible and the morphine seized from Ghazipur and Varanasi recently by the Central Bureau of Investigation was produced from the small quantities leaking out from the opium fields.

The Golden Triangle opium network



However, what is causing concern to the authorities was that in some cases the morphine manufactured in the shabby, ill-equipped laboratories was sold to persons having suspected Mafia links. These smugglers, though never in the picture directly, bought the drug from the manufacturers through middlemen. There is the case of J. B. Shah, arrested in January this year by the CBI at Bombay along with an accomplice. Shah told the police that the 400 grammes of heroin seized from him near the Taj Hotel was bought from a well-known Bombay smuggler but delivered by a middleman.

Incidentally, the same smuggler is suspected to be the customer for morphine produced in the illicit laboratory unearthed at Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. He was still at large as the CBI have not yet been able to establish his involvement for want of sufficient evidence. Investigations have, however, revealed that he operated through couriers and kept out of police reach.

The threat of India becoming a breeding ground, for the Mafia originates from the existence of such persons in the country. Being aware of the profits involved in the illicit trade, they might try and expand their operations by involving others in the dragnet.

Even if these smugglers do not encourage morphine or heroin production within the country, they can definitely establish a strong network for using India as a permanent transit point for the drug pipeline to Europe and the USA.

There was a distinct possibility of such an eventuality in view of liberal laws and loose customs checks at various airports. And if the international gangs keep on transporting the drugs through India, they might as well plan out a strategy for creating a consumer market in India itself.

It is in this context that the secret conclave of smugglers at Bombay acquires a matter of concern. And one wonders whether the Mafia bosses were thinking on the same lines when they met in the cosy comforts of the five-star hotel last summer...

The Vasant Vihar residence of Mr Faoud Elyas, the Mafia hitman

A rare photograph of the Chicago mafia chiefs found by the Internal Revenue Service in a raid at the home of Joe Di Varco on 10 December 1980. The photograph is believed to have been taken in 1978 when the Mafia bosses gathered in a Chicago restaurant. (Anti-clockwise from center of picture) Anthony J. "Big Tuna Accardo, Joseph "Black Joe" Amato, Joseph "Little Caesar" Di Varco, James "Turk" Torello, Joseph "The Clown" Lombardo, John "Jackie the Lackey" Cerone, Alfred Pilotto, Vincent Lolano, a man later identified as Marti Accardo and Joseph "Doves" Aiuppa.

The origins of the Mafia hitmen

The first and, even today, possibly the most exhaustive public report on organised crime in the USA is the book, *Murder Incorporated* which was written by two deputy attorneys attached to the New York district attorney's office. A Four Square paperback edition of *Murder Inc.* was available in India till the late Fifties but, unfortunately, it has not been seen for the last two decades.

Murder Inc. provided the basic information for Ernest Hemingway's short story, *The Killers*, which was later filmed, about a Mafia-style execution implemented by two professional hitmen who fly to Los Angeles from the east coast of the USA carrying a briefcase. At Los Angeles they move as if the whole operation has been pre-planned with military precision. They take a taxi to a school, climb up the steps to a particular floor and without any difficulty at all—such is their information—they arrive at the room where the intended victim is working alone. The school is deserted because it is a Saturday and the victim is one of the two or three people in the huge, empty building. As soon as the victim sees the killers, he understands what they have come for. One of the two holds and gags him, the other opens his businessman's briefcase, fits a silencer to his hand-gun and pummels six bullets into the victim's body. Having carried out the execution in a chilling silence within the closed room, they depart as mysteriously as they came.

In *Murder Inc.* the New York district attorney's office presented a complete breakdown of the various methods adopted by organised gangs in the USA in the violent Thirties when prohibition, prostitution and the numbers racket provided the big earnings to organised crime. This information became available to New York law officials only because one gang-leader was persuaded by his wife to confess after he had been imprisoned. Jack R. turned out to head a gang that worked only as the underworld's executioners. His was one of the murder squads operating in Brooklyn which soon made a speciality out of executions or contract-killings. He also gave the law officials an insight into the amazing organisation that the big gang-leaders had agreed upon.

It started with an ageing gang-leader of Italian origin who felt that the underworld was wasting too many men and too much of its effort in fighting gang-wars against each other. He, therefore, sent out invitations to the big gangsters all over North America and called them to a conference at his own den. Here was born the 'Cartel' or the 'Syndicate,' and it is from that date that the evil insinuations of these two words of the English language began to be felt in common usage. Between them the gang-leaders divided the USA and parts of Canada and Mexico into personal kingdoms which were to work together in a loose underworld confederation. Each mobster's territory was clearly defined at the conference. No gang-leader could operate in another man's territory without the permission of the local boss. An entire code of operations was decided upon at the conference—an administrative code to rival that of the government. At the very top, the highest executive and judicial authority of the underworld was vested in the one body—the 'kangaroo court' of the gangbosses who had divided America among themselves at this conference. This 'kangaroo court' was the last court of appeal. It decided disputes between different gangs and between individual criminals. If a senior and powerful mobster had committed a breach of trust or otherwise threatened the interests of some other underworld kings, he would be tried in abstentia by the 'kangaroo court' and its decision was binding; even on the friends of the accused.

Murder Inc. mentions the case of a senior mobster who broke the underworld code and was condemned to death by a secret conclave of the 'kangaroo court.' His best friend was asked to execute him. The accused was invited to come across to discuss his dispute with the other party and his best friend. The three men went for a drive on the highway to discuss their problem. The two contestants sat in the front, the car being driven by the man who had been wronged. The accused's best friend sat in the seat at the back. As the three of them drove along the highway that evening, the man on the back seat would often bend forward and rest his hands on the front seat, between the two sitting on the front seat. The accused kept an eye on his friend every time the latter bent forward but after this had gone on for ten or twleve times, the man relaxed and became careless. Then, when the executioner felt absolutely sure that the intended victim, his best friend, had been lulled into complacency, he took out an ice-pick from his coat's inside pocket and stabbed his best friend in the heart.

Other killings, for which regular contracts were given to the underworld's soldiers, were more dramatic in both their ingenuity and their execution. The intended victim's daily

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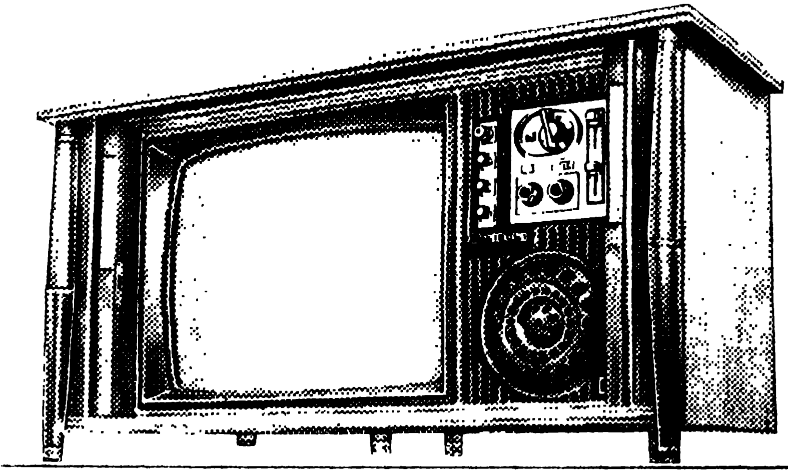

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routine was carefully studied. A quick clean killing was carried out and the killers would escape in a getaway car. The first getaway car would be abandoned at some distance from the killing, where a second car would be waiting for them. Later the second car would also be abandoned and a third getaway car used. All the three getaway cars would be stolen ones. Moreover, they would carry number-plates stolen from other cars.

The guns used for these killings would have no markings on them and were as untraceable as the car-thieves. According to Jack R., whose confession first gave US officials a clue about the 'syndicate,' a killer could simply toss the pistol into a garbage dump or a gutter and forget about it. Most of the pistols used would be stolen in the first place. Thanks to the well-coordinated getaway of the killers, many of the Mafia-style killings in the Thirties would be carried out in broad daylight. Sometimes machine guns would be used, too. Machine guns and bombs were often used to blow up establishments or shops whose owners had to be taught a lesson. The motive was simple: the owners had to pay "protection" money. If they did not, the mobsters would attack them. The modus operandi was simpler. A limousine would zoom in front of the shop, a rapid burst of machinegun fire would explode out of the car's window for a minute or two and then the car (a stolen, getaway vehicle) would speed away before anybody knew what was happening.

Al Capone was the most notorious gangster of the Thirties in the USA! His reputation emanating from the St. Valentine's Day massacre in a Chicago warehouse of Capone's rivals, in the days before the 'syndicate' organised the underworld into a 'cartel.' However, according to *Murder Inc.*, perhaps the criminal responsible for the highest number of killings was not Al Capone but Lepke, who operated a firm called Lepke and Gurrah, the name of the two partners controlling the gang. During the notorious industrial wars of the Thirties, when both employers and trade-unions raised private armies to fight out gun-battles, Lepke and Gurrah were supplying guns and gunmen to both the factory-owners and the trade-unions. Acording to New York law officials, Lepke was probably responsible for some 200 murders but he was so well-connected, with friends in high places like the US senate, that when he was once tried in court in connection with some vague case, the judge not only acquitted him but also gave him a forty-man police guard detail to protect him till he reached his house—just in case a rival mobster planned to shoot Lepke down as he came out of the courtroom.

According to *Murder Inc.* it was difficult to pin Lepke on any of the 200 murders he ordered. His method was ingenious. He would tell a lieutenant that somebody had to be killed. The lieutenant would tell one of his own men who would pass the message on to to one of his lackeys and so on, till the last man in the chain would simply call some youth hanging around on the street and tell him to kill the person. This chain was so conducive to secrecy that if one person in the chain broke down to the police, all that he knew was the name of one man in the chain. Therefore, to maintain secrecy it would be necessary to eliminate just one man in the chain and nothing would be known about who that man had received orders from. ■

The faux pas

A misleading headline in one of the capital's leading dailies sent a shock-wave through the corridors of power in New Delhi on 8 April. It left the telephones jangling in the offices of senior men reponsible for the anti-narcotic efforts in India. The concern the headline caused was genuine; and the reaction it generated, reasonable. If what the newspaper conveyed had been correct, it would have dealt a severe blow to India's reputation as a nation having effective control over opium production and the manufacture of its derivative, heroin. The report would also have demolished the official claims that heroin seized at various places in the country was smuggled in from outside and not manufactured locally.

The origin of the news item came about when the Narcotics and Couterfeit Currency Branch of the CBI conducted a raid at Ghazipur, a town in UP about 800 kms from Delhi, and unearthed an illicit morphine-processing laboratory besides half-a-kilogram of manufactured contraband. A reporter of the daily who happened to be covering a public meeting being addressed by the Congress(I) general secretary, Mr Kalpnath Rai, in the same area got wind of the seizure and followed it up. The misleading headline, it seems, was committed at a level other than the reporter's, probably the newsdesk. Instead of stating that a morphine laboratory had been traced, the man on the newsdesk wrote: "Heroin lab with Mafia links found." The one who committed the mistake is probably unaware that till today not a single heroin laboratory has been reported from anywhere in the country—a fact which India can be proud of, especially at various international forums for narcotic control and drug abuse.

When other inquisitive newsmen contacted officials for a follow-up on the "heroin laboratory" story, they tried hard to explain that the clandestine laboratory manufactured morphine and not heroin. Said one of the officers: "It is merely a case of careless headline...the fact that had been mentioned in the text of the report is correct... we have seized a morphine laboratory." The officials, however, confirmed that the morphine prodced in the laboratory was meant for supply to Mr "Biryani," (for obvious reasons we cannot disclose his name) a Bombayite with suspected Mafia links. While heroin is not produced in India, a small amount of morphine goes from India to the Mafia channels. Though the two men arrested during the raid did not name their Bombay boss, they confessed that the drug had to be delivered to a courier coming from Bombay.

Police records show that Mr "Biryani" had stayed for many years at Rajinder Nagar in New Delhi. From a small-time illegal foreign exchange dealer, he rose to the position of one of India's top narcotics kings with suspected Mafia connections. The drug enforcement agencies, has been on Mr "Biryani's" track for a long time but he has always eluded them. More, they have not been able to arrest him for want of direct evidence. One of his relatives is, however, facing prosecution for drug-peddling at Delhi.

The CBI's success at Ghazipur was followed by the detection of a similar morphine laboratory at Varanasi. Clues to the existence of the laboratory which converted crude opium into morphine powder were found following the seizure of two kilograms of morphine powder and arrest of three persons near a luxurious hotel. The existence of such laboratories and the manufacture of morphine powder in Varanasi were comparatively more than in other areas as the Vanarasi drug-peddlers find ready buyers among the foreigners who visit the town. Ghazipur, became a hunting ground for the smugglers because the government factory manufacturing morphine for export and pharmaceutical use is located there. The CBI also reported that morphine packed in bottles had leaked out from the factory on many occasions. The direct involvement of the employees were suspected in such cases and enquiries were underway. The officials explained that two morphine-processing laboratories had been found in such a short span of time because this was the opium harvesting season.

GAUTAM PATOLE

INVESTIGATION

COMRADE DANGE: END OF THE CAMARADERIE

SHEHNAZ SYED investigates how the CPI finally managed to throw out a founding father.

THE curtain has finally rung down on 82-year-old Sripad Amrit Dange. A defeaning silence marks his departure from the Communist Party of India. There are no cheers, no laurels for his historic role in the movement; no tears for his exit; only grim faces and a stern resolution of the national council expelling its first recipient of the Order of Lenin from the party.

The long rope Mr Dange had been walking on since 1978 has been cut. The CPI's national council, at its five day meeting in New Delhi which concluded on 16 April, held him guilty of trying to divert the party from the political line adopted at the Bhatinda congress in 1978, trying to create support for Mrs Indira Gandhi. It has accused him of identifying with the "splitters and renegades" who, led by his daughter, Mrs Roza Deshpande, have formed the All India Communist Party.

The national council voted to expel Mr Dange from the party for "his persistent defiance and violation of all party disciplines and norms and for his splitting and other anti-party activities."

Mr Dange himself did not attend the national council meeting, and he stoutly resisted efforts by the CPI to persuade him to attend. And this did not add to his popularity: even his supporters, who are keeping a low profile these days, were resentful—"at least he should have come and fought for his opinion," they said. With characteristic unpredictability, Mr Dange has reserved comment on the decision His plans are a matter of conjecture.. Most members were of the opinion that he would not join his daughter's party.

Ajoy Bhawan, the CPI citadel at New Delhi, was bustling with busy communists in mid-April. Each room had been converted into a miniature conference-cum-bedroom by members looking for a quiet corner to exchange thoughts or sleep off the exhaustion. Mr Dange's expulsion had all the potential of being a momentous decision, fraught with nerve racking tension and high tempers. It turned out to be a tame affair: perhaps its inevitability robbed it of excitement. And this, coupled with Mr Dange's absence, turned the most important item on the national council's agenda to an uneventful three hour speechifying. The decision was unanimous. Of the 128 national council members present, only two abstained from voting: Mr K. C. Choudhary from Bihar and Mr Palekar from Goa. Even Mr Mohit Sen, who at one time had been indicted by the party for his support to Mr Dange, voted in favour. And, as Mr Sen pointed out, so did former AITUC general secretary K. G. Srivastava, also regarded as a Dange liner.

Since 1978 Dange has been looking for, and creating opportunities to embarrass the CPI leadership. What began as a difference of opinion was slowly turned by him into a personal vendetta against CPI general secretary Rajeshwar Rao. The party has been deferring action against him, for a variety of reasons, including respect, for several years now. Only recently had the question regarding his expulsion changed from a hesitant "if" to a more positive "when." Mr Dange's supporters quote him as saying that he does not care about opinion and any action against him as, "my place is secure in history." But since it is a question of communists, the security of the place will presumably be determined by who writes that history. "He has always been what we call a national bourgeois," say his detractors. "Communism for him is just a garb to clothe what is essentially a bourgeois mentality." His differences with the party, they claim, can be traced to the Meerut conspiracy case in 1928 when he presented a line of defence different from the official party line. A few members were even heard repeating what the CPI had dismissed as CPI(M) propaganda in 1964: Dange, the breakaway group had then claimed, had written a letter to the Viceroy offering "to serve the cause of his Imperial majesty." A copy of the letter to the Viceroy had been circulated but was dismissed by the CPI in 1964 as malicious propaganda. Those embers are being stoked again.

His supporters are amazed at "the lengths to which they will go."His followers eulogise Mr Dange's role; his only fault, the Dangeites admit, is that he made his differences public. A young man from Bihar, who was very vocal once assured that his identity would not be disclosed, said, "If Comrade Dange had carried on his battle within the party he would have won by this time." Will you leave the CPI now? I asked. Sheepishly, but with a touch of defiance, he replied, "No." Why? "It is a question of technicalities." What technicalities? "Well he has broken the party discipline."

It all began at the Bhatinda congress held from 31 March to 7 April 1978. Mr Dange's differences with the party became all too obvious there. The CPI, licking wounds inflicted by a series of miscalculations, was trying to heal itself at the Bhatinda congress, desperately searching for an identity and direction to restore its credibility. Back bent under the weight of demoralisation, the party was determined to use the Bhatinda congress to straighten its spine. But there were differences as to the nature of the medicine, which had come into the open. CPI general secretary Rajeshwar Rao threatened to resign and cooperate with the CPI(M) unless chairman S. A. Dange was compelled to withdraw his thesis: a lengthy document in which Mr Dange appealed for a realliance with the Congress(I) to defeat the "right reactionary" regime. Mr Rao saw red, and was supported by Mr Bhupesh Gupta and Mr Yogendra Sharma amongst others. Mr Mohit Sen and Mr N. K. Krishnan remained noncommittal.

A few days later, Mr Dange went on record criticising the draft resolution prepared by the party. He insisted that the CPI's mistake was not in supporting the Emergency but in its failure to withdraw support when the government's anti-people policies began to assume clear shape. He strongly disapproved of plans for CPI-CPI(M) unity; it should not be a "precondition for revolutionary advance," he said. "We are miles away from each other regarding the understanding of Marxism-Leninism both on the national and international levels. We should cooperate with them in defence of the people and mass organisations, but this should not affect our own unity."

It was this which got Mr Dange some support, even from those fundamentally opposed to an alliance with the Congress(I). It made sense to the CPI members, ever wary of the CPI(M). Mr Dange's error was in converting a plausible argument into a personal attack on Mr Rajeshwar Rao. He accused the general secretary of having "secret talks" with the CPI(M), and of trying to liquidate the party. This line did not sell. In his last letter to Mr Rao which prompted the central executive committee of the CPI to recommend his expulsion, Mr Dange projected himself as the "stumbling block" in the way of Rao's nefarious designs.

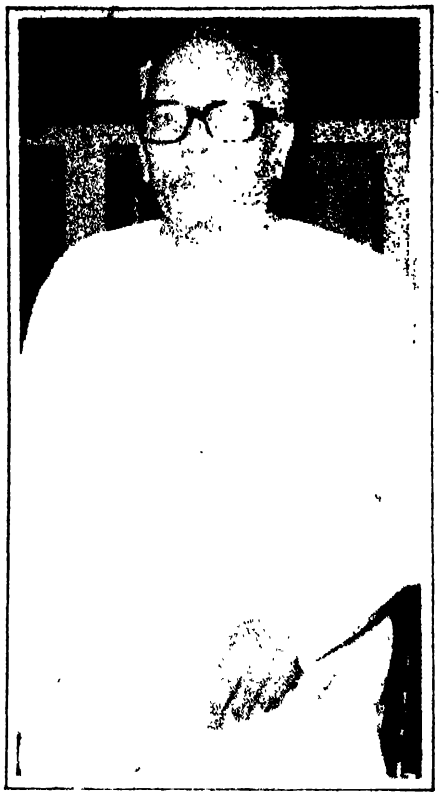
ON the other extreme from Mr Dange's view was a third opinion which emerged at about this time. The party's left liners, the West Bengal unit, adopted an amendment proposed by Mr Biswanath Mukherjee to the political draft resolution. The mistake, this amendment said, could be traced to 1969, to the oversimplification of the 1969 Congress split, when the CPI welcomed Mrs Gandhi as progressive and rejected the others as reactionary. At that time, the amendment said, "the party should have taken the initiative towards building a third front comprising all left and democratic forces. Had this been done, people who wanted to get rid of Mrs Gandhi's corrupt rule would have had an alternative to the Janata Party." Mr Mukherjee said that the CPI, which refused to recognise the emergence of popular struggles in 1973, became the champion of Indira rule—and thereby helped the CPI(M) to emerge as the champion of the downtrodden.

This hardhitting critique of the party's performance was too bitter a pill to swallow. The Bhatinda congress saw the Dange and Mukherjee groups at loggerheads, and wisely drew a line between the two extreme opinions. Initial support of the Emergency, it declared, was wrong. In a major concession to the West Bengal lobby, the political resolution said that the CPI should have demanded Mrs Gandhi's resignation after the Allahabad High Court verdict. It should have also opposed the 42nd amendment. It, however, described the 1969 to 1974 period as "glorious" from the party's perspective. The congress decided to work for a left and democratic alternative. This, the resolution said, ruled out both the continuance of Janata Party rule and restoration of Congress rule.

This resolution was heralded as a defeat for Mr Dange. The CPI, eager to shed its pro-Indira mantle, was reluctant to make any concession to Mrs Gandhi. Left and democratic unity, the CPI was convinced, was the only answer.

Its machinery went into work almost immediately to initiate talks for joint action with the CPI(M). Rajeshwar Rao spoke at length on the advantages of left unity, even as CPI(M) leaders turned evasive, expressing scepticism about the CPI change of heart. It was only after the Assembly elections in 1980 that the CPI(M) visibly softened its stand and came around to the unity line. Perhaps the CPI's reasonably good performance at the polls and the CPI(M)'s inherent fear of the Congress(I) influenced the change.

Mr Dange went into a sulk after the Bhatinda congress. He did not attend subsequent meetings of the party. He only broke his silence after the Chikmagalur by-elections to the Lok Sabha to send a statement to the press congratulating Mrs Indira Gandhi on her victory—despite the CPI directing its members to vote neither for the Congress(I) nor the Janata Party candidate. Even today one meets members critical of the "ambiguous line" adopted by the CPI. It is not in the party's tradition, they say; the CPI has always taken a firm line and not a 'neither this nor that' approach. Although Mr Dange's congratulations were a direct contradiction to the Bhatinda line, the central executive committee merely sent a mild note of disapproval to him. Made milder by the telegram which preceded it, wishing Mr Dange a speedy recovery from his operation.


Rajeshwar Rao

In early 1979 newspapers began naming Mr Mohit Sen, Mr Kalyansundaram, Mr H. K. Vyas and Mr Bhogendra Jha as Dange supporters.

On 18 September Mr Dange, after a long gap, attended the national council meeting. Here the party adopted an electoral policy identical to that of the CPI(M)—opposition to the Janata Party and Congress(I), a positive attitude towards the Janata(S)-Congress combine, and accent on left unity. Mr Rao later claimed that the policy had Mr Dange's support, but admitted in an aside, "Comrade Dange might have his own views." Comrade Dange did have his own views but was persuaded by Comrade Rao to refrain from airing them just then.

The situation worsened. On 30 October the CPI announced that Mr Dange would not be contesting the 1980 Lok Sabha elections from Bombay. But on 18 November Mr Dange sent a telegram to Mr H. N. Bahuguna congratulating him on his decision to join the Congress(I). "Please accept my congrats on your reported decision to join the Congress(I) in the present political conditions," he said. Mr Bahuguna replied that he was "deeply touched." Observers interpreted Mr Dange's action as another insult to Mr Rajeshwar Rao who had earlier tried to persuade Mr Bahuguna not to join the Congress(I). This elicited some reaction at the central executive council meeting which Mr Dange did not attend. Angry West Bengal members demanded his expulsion. However, no concrete action was taken, only disapproval voiced.

A few days later, Mr Dange announced that he and his daughter Mrs Roza Deshpande would contest the Lok Sabha elections, presumably with Congress(I) support. This sent Mr Rajeshwar Rao flying to Bombay. After talks, Mr Dange agreed not to contest. Members doubt that he ever intended to contest the polls.

In December 1979 Mr Dange sent in his resignation from the post of chairman, and from membership of the central secretariat and CEC. He retained his membership of the national council. As is his habit till today, Mr Dange sent in the resignations to the newspapers before informing the CPI officially.

The CPI was totally unnerved. In the midst of preparations for the Lok Sabha elections it was torn between its desire to keep him away from the election platform, and to avoid a rift within the party. It thus decided to defer consideration of the resignations to an unspecified date after the elections. The CEC meanwhile sent him notes of censure, a meaningless formality at this stage.

Mr Dange gave his views definite shape. The CPI, he said, "has failed to recognize Mrs Gandhi as a representative of the patriotic national bourgeoisie which is intrinsically anti-monopolist, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal." On left and democratic unity, he said that "bereft of any concrete minimum programme it is serving the party as a smokescreen."

His other views were as provocative:

- On Charan Singh: "A representative of the most rustic and reactionary kulaks, backward in views and anti-social and casteist in character. How can we conceive him to be a left front partner ?"
- On the CPI(M). "Does unity mean listening to the opportunist dictums of EMS and surrendering to the dictates of Pramode Dasgupta? Has our party lost all sense of dignity and self-respect assiduously built up on decades of struggle and sacrifice of our working class?"

There was no reaction from the party for several days, until its Tamil Nadu wing took the lead on 3 December in condemning Mr Dange. But he was now in a jubilant mood after Mrs Gandhi's victory. On 8 January, he sent a telegram to Mrs Gandhi congratulating her on her victory. And he sent another telegram, of condolence, to CPI(M) leader Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad. On 11 January, the CPI central secretariat finally recommended to the CEC to accept Mr Dange's resignation from party posts.

Mr Dange, however, successfully managed not only to embarrass the CPI but also excite speculation about a 'patch up' between the CPI and Congress(I). The CPI retaliated with clarifications but this did not still the speculaton. Mr Dange continued his attack on the CPI(M), defending the Congress(I), but on 30 January circulated a note modifying his stand somewhat. He called upon the party to view Mrs Gandhi's policies on merit and discard its inflexible approach. This conciliatory gesture had its desired effect. The national council, while accepting Mr Dange's resignation, recognised Mrs Gandhi's progressive stand on some foreign and domestic issues.

But this was only a temporary truce. The situation took a turn for the worse when in March the CPI began taking action against Dange supporters. Mr Mohit Sen was sent to Gujarat as a punishment for trying to form a parallel party and encouraging factionalism within the CPI. Mr H. K. Vyas saved his skin by abstaining from voting on the resolution accepting Mr Dange's resignations instead of voting against it. Mr Kalyansundaram was regarded as a spent force. And Mr Anil Rajimwala was sent to Bihar.

In protest, some Dange supporters formed the National Communist Party at Nagpur. They were led by a former CPI secretary, Mr Gopal Kelkar. On 13 April last year, this was dissolved to form the All India Communist Party. On 19 April, Mrs Roza Deshpande, who had resigned from the CPI on 10 April, publicly supported the Congress (I) and warned the public against parties who formed "opportunistic alliances to oust Mrs Gandhi from power."

Mr Rajeshwar Rao then came out with a statement describing Mrs Gandhi as more dangerous than the RSS-Jana Sangh The CPI was rocked by a series of expulsions and resignations. Mr Dange continued his tirade addressing a trade union rally on May Day at Kamgar maidan in Bombay even as the AITUC, with CITU, was holding another rally. Here he condemned the CPI-CPI(M) alliance saying that the CPI(M) did not represent the interests of the workers. Again the CPI did not take any action. Only the Maharashtra unit of the party issued a chargesheet against him. However, the split was taking shape:

- 11 August: CPI splits in Uttar Pradesh and the state unit of the AICP is formed.
- 19 August: The West Bengal unit of the AICP is formed.
- 9 September: The Delhi unit comes into existence.

And subsequently the AICP set up units in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh as well. The CPI still refused to take action against Mr Dange despite his support for the AICP. The main questions bothering them were: What would be the reaction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union? Would there be a major rift in the CPI or the AITUC as a result?

As regards the first question, CPI members were jubilant when Mr Leonid Brezhnev appeared to cold-shoulder Mr Dange during his visit to India last year. Later reports that Mr Brezhnev had sent an emissary to meet Mr Dange dampened the jubilation, but not for long. The CPI dismissed this as a fabricated story, churned out by the press. One member even dared to say, "The CPSU does not have the right to interfere in our internal affairs." But perhaps the fact that the CPI has gone ahead with the expulsion proves that it has the support of the CPSU in taking this action.

The final straw came in March this year when Mr Dange attended the convention of the AICP at Meerut from 12 March. Here he described the AICP as a "timely and historic necessity," saying that it had "at last found a way of success of the national democratic revolution." Mr Dange had finally overplayed his hand and the second question bothering the CPI resolved itself. Detractors and supporters united against Mr Dange. Mr Rajeshwar Rao called for an explanation in writing, informing Mr Dange that he had "chosen to deliberately and publicly put yourself outside the pale of the party. " Mr Dange's reply shocked the CPI. Its insolent tone was condemned by all as an hysterical outburst: it led members to question his sanity. Mr Dange claimed that he went to Meerut to attend the 52nd anniversary of the Meerut conspiracy case and not to form a rival party.

Accusing Mr Rao of "shallow efficiency" and a "holier than thou" attitude, Mr Dange said that the CPI would continue to grow "despite your policy of liquidation misnamed unity." Defending his support of Mrs Gandhi, he asked, "Why did you not run a hate campaign against that great kulak Prime Minister? Was it because he was of your class?"

"Dear Rajeshwar Rao," the letter continued, "it is easy to humbug new and younger recruits. But this time you had to deal with me. Yes, your control of the purse and the lie-machines may help you for a time but not all the time." Mr Dange calls Comrade Rao the "evil genius of the party" who has somehow reached the top "to do your satanic tasks of freezing or killing the party and party members."Mr Dange concluded with a final insult: "I will like the national council to elect a new general secretary and send you to Calcutta to work for unity with Pramode Das Gupta who, I hope, will not send you to the burial grounds."

He was expelled by the national council on 13 April. A few workers from Maharashtra resigned in protest but, by and large, the leaders do not visualise a split either in the party or in the AITUC where Dange's hold, even though he is still the president, is minimal. Mr Dange has outlived his utility, a member said, and his rantings in recent years lacked substance.

One goes to press wondering what that indomitable leader's next move is going to be. Mr Dange has not been one to take defeat lying down and his 'no comments' has not fooled those who know him. But, as a CPI member said with some relief, "There is not much he can do to harm us now. He is out of the party and he alone is responsible for his actions. It has nothing to do with the CPI anymore, thank God." ■

Bhupesh Gupta, CPI MP

"The AICP is not even embarrassing"

Q. Do you agree with the charge that the CPI was left rudderless after the 1963 split and that its lack of direction was one of the reasons which led it to support Mrs Indira Gandhi before and during the Emergency?

A: This is factually incorrect. The CPI was at no time without direction, whether before or after the split. The party had its own policy in 1964. In December, just after the formal split, the Bombay congress adopted a party programme.

Q: They why did your party decide to support Mrs Gandhi in 1969?

A: What support? In 1967 we fought the Congress Party. In many states we formed non-Congress governments. In West Bengal we formed the Left government—how could it be interpreted as support to the Congress Party? Even in 1969 we fought the Congress Party in West Bengal and we won as a united Left Front.

Q: But in 1971 you entered into an electoral alliance with Mrs Indira Gandhi's Congress.

A: In some places electoral adjustments took place and in other places it did not. The grand alliance was the result of the 1969 split in the Congress. Both the CPI(M) and we supported Mr Giri for the Presidential election and as it happened he was also supported by Mrs Gandhi...and he won.

Q: Would you say that the party's 11th congress at Bhatinda and the political resolution adopted there marked a turning point in the CPI's chequered history?

A: I would not use those words. The resolution adopted at the Bhatinda congress assumed particular significance because at that time we corrected some of our mistakes and adopted the line of uniting left and democratic forces.

Q: Why is it that the Bhatinda congress did not agree with Mr Biswanath Mukherjee's proposed amendment to the political resolution that the initial mistake was made by the CPI in 1969 when it supported Mrs Gandhi's faction as progressive and rejected the other Congress faction as arbitrary and subjective?

A: I have told you: in 1969 we fought the Indira Congress in West Bengal where we formed the ministry as a united left and democratic front. But 1969 centred around specific issues. We had been campaigning for bank nationalisation ever since Independence, so we supported Mrs Gandhi on it. We had been campaigning for the abolition of privy purses and so again we supported her on this issue.

And, if you remember, on 31 December 1969 the Preventive Detention Act expired and became due for renewal. Plans were being made to renew it for another two or three years. When a proposal was made by her (Mrs Gandhi) in December we came out strongly against it. We said we would oppose the government, and if we had, the government would have fallen as Mrs Gandhi had a minority in Parliament. The result was that the preventive detention bill was not introduced; it was not even mentioned in 1970, in any statute or record. It was only after the 1971 elections that she brought in preventive detention through the Maintenance of Internal Security ordinance in May, which was enacted in June. We opposed it. So it is not a question of supporting Mrs Gandhi. In 1974 we supported the railway strike. Several of our leaders, including Mrs Parvati Krishnan, were arrested. We opposed Turkman gate, press censorship, sterilisations and demolitions during the Emergency.

We were politically against rightwing forces. We supported bank nationalisation and the abolition of privy purses. We supported her only in the policies which we had been supporting since Nehru's time, although we had always been critical of his weaknesses. We were an opposition party, we took our stand on merit.

Q: So where did you go wrong?

A: Our support to the Emergency was wrong. And the line adopted at the Bhatinda congress has been corroborated by experience.

Q: What experience?

A: The concept of left and democratic unity is gaining popular support.

Q: Can you foresee CPI-CPI(M) unity?

A: We have come closer (though) we have our problems. We have our ideological and political differences. But we have come closer. In Kerala we are working together.

Q: Why did the CPI support Charan Singh?

A: We did not support him, that why. We, the CPI and CPI(M), thought that the RSS dominated Janata government should be brought down. And in the situation existing in 1979 it could not be done unless we had supported the formation of a government by Charan Singh.

Q: What is your reaction to Mrs Gandhi's attack on the left and democratic front, particularly in West Bengal and Kerala?

A: It is not an attack only on the left and democratic front—it is an attack on democracy. It is a plain subversion of the Constitution. It is an attack on the left and democratic forces and on democracy. Mrs Gandhi has always been making exhortations against agitation, (but) now in West Bengal and Kerala her party is conducting agitations. In West Bengal there was a violent agitation on 30 March. In Calcutta they took out a violent procession. And they sought to impose a *bandh* on the people by increasing bombing, vandalism, arson and physical attacks all over Bengal. Two dozen workers were killed by Congress(I) elements. During the *bandh* anti-social elements were seen in action as Congress(I) volunteers. Why? Because Mrs Gandhi realised that by democratic methods she could not dislodge the Left Front government.

Q: How do you, or rather the left and democratic front, propose to counter this threat?

A: We believe in democracy. With popular support we shall retaliate. We shall meet the situation politically, not through arson and violence.

Q: In view of what you have just said, who is your real enemy: the RSS or the Congress(I)?

A: We are dead opposed to the RSS. It has nothing in common with us.

Q: What about the Congress(I)?

A: Ask the Congress(I) It is taking the support of the RSS in several states.

Q: A certain section of your party feels that the CPI leadership, instead of strengthening its own position, is obsessed with the idea of left unity.

A: The two are not contradictory. The CPI base should be strengthened for left and democratic unity. Both (CPI's strength and left unity) have become vital for leading the nation, and more important, for leading united mass struggles.

Q: What about the section in your party which still favours allegiance to the Congress(I)?

A: In the national council we have no such member. We do not know about individuals. But there is no difference of opinion within the Party.

Q: How far has the All India Communist Party (AICP)affected the strength of your party? Or, do you merely regard it as an embarrassment and no real threat?

A: We dont't attach any importance to it. It is not even embarrassing. Only a few hundred members have left our party which has a membership of 450,000. Among the names associated with the AICP are those who left the CPI over 20 years ago, and others who have never been members of the CPI. But it seems Mrs Gandhi attaches importance to it. She sent her people to their meeting at Meerut.

The Government

There is sugar, but...

The artificial sugar scarcity we commented on earlier (SUNDAY 15 March) still persists. Even though there are ample surplus stocks with the government from which sufficient quantities can be released to counter the rising trend of open market sugar prices, agriculture minister Rao Birendra Singh has chosen to act differently. He has written to the chief ministers, asking them to vigorously implement the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act to bring down sugar prices: This despite the fact that last April the states bungled the distribution of sugar imported by the STC.

If the ministry had only released an extra 50,000 to 1,00,000 tonnes of free sale sugar, the sudden rise in prices in the second week of April could have been avoided. Sugar factories now have 29.20 lakh tonnes of stocks with them against 27.60 lakh tonnes a year ago. Total availability of free sale sugar stands at 17 lakh tonnes, nearly twice last year's level of nine lakh tonnes. Sugar production is also showing an upward trend As demand for sugar goes up in the summer months, 1,80,000 tonnes of additional free sale sugar could be released till September. But for April the free sale release is only 15,000 tonnes more than the previous month's.

Exim bank still far off

Establishment of the much-talked-about Export-Import Bank is likely to be further delayed. A bill to make it a statutory body was supposed to be introduced in this budget session. But with only a few weeks of the session left, chances of the bill being introduced in it seem remote. This delay is surprising as there are no major snags holding things up. The law ministry has already drafted the bill, which the law minister has to see and approve. The commerce ministry which has a keen interest in the bill and the finance ministry which proposed the idea of the Export-Import Bank in February 1980 are keeping their fingers crossed.

Big changes in finance ministry

Several big changes are in the offing among the top bureaucrats in the finance ministry. Finance secretary G. Ramachandran is going to Manila as India's executive director with the Asian Development Bank. Mr V. B. Eashwara is due to take over from Mr Ramachandran, that is, if the government does not post Mr M. Narasimhan, at present with the IMF, back in the ministry. Economic affairs secretary R N. Malhotra is tipped for the IMF post in place of Mr Narasimhan. But the top post of chief economic adviser, vacant since December 1980, will not be filled up in this shuffle. The person who should have naturally moved up to the post cannot do so as he is "disqualified" by marriage: having wedded the niece of the finance minister in the previous government.

Free thinking on free trade zones

The finance and commerce ministries do not see eye to eye with each other on major policy issues. How else can one explain the divergence of views between finance minister R. Venkataraman and commerce secretary P. K. Kaul. The former told ASSOCHAM's annual meeting in New Delhi on 19 April that the government would consider the establishment of more free trade zones in the country. (At present there are only two: at Kandla and Santa Cruz). Mr Venkataraman obviously wanted more such zones to boost exports and bridge the big trade gap anticipated for this year(1981-82). But only the previous day (18 April), Mr Kaul had told a meeting of garment exporters that the government was not considering setting up any more free trade zones in the country. Instead, the same facilities that were available in the zones would be extended to those intending to set up 100 per cent export-oriented units, he added. If leading economic ministries cannot even agree on policy, then how can a beginning be made in solving the problem of sagging exports. For, it is only after policy has been decided upon that the problems of implementation can be tackled.

Will US multinationals be allowed in?

US multinationals seeking entry in India have a new, highly placed friend: Mr L. K. Jha, former Indian ambassador to the USA and currently chairman of the Economic Administration Reforms Commission. His prescription for boosting Indian exports to the USA is: get US companies to set up large units in India and also take their help in marketing the products of these units in the USA. Why? Because the Americans know what will sell well in their country and also how best to sell it. The whole scheme will have the added advantage of not tying up too much of scarce Indian capital in these large units. He also proposed that instead of exporting finished products to the USA, India assemble the components there. This would effectively beat US trade barriers. Mr Jha was seeking to take a leaf out of the US multinationals' book in trying to gain entry into a foreign market.

But if Mr Jha is specially qualified to make these proposals because he has been an ambassador in the USA then another equally qualified former ambassador to the USA, Mr T. N. Kaul, had diametrically opposite views on at least one point. Sell your own goods in the USA, he said, and don't appoint Americans to lobby for us. There are certain obvious contradictions in Mr Jha's arguments. He is for using cheap Indian labour on one hand and on the other for setting up assembly plants in the USA which will presumably employ costly US industrial labour. But, more important, Mr Jha's views run counter to many accepted Indian views on the role of foreign investment in India. Was he speaking solely for himself or is he a harbinger of new changes that will be formally announced later?

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SPECIAL REPORT

Tarla's story

The young woman's name is not actually Tarla: we have changed the name for obvious reasons. But every word of this simple, and yet so complex, story is true. Tarla's story is typical of the stories of thousands of Bombay's middle class career wives.

By SHOBHA KILACHAND

By traditional Indian standards, Tarla married late. She was all of 27. The only daughter among five brothers, she'd grown up in an environment where being a sister (and daughter) was a privilege and not a curse. She was encouraged to study and, later, to take up a job in a bank. She led the kind of life thousands of 'career girls' in Bombay lead. She stayed with her parents, commuted to the office, spent her lunch hour shopping for Garden Sarees at discount sales, waiting for the 20 per cent rebate week at Handloom House, getting her eyebrows tweezed and arms waxed by a Chinese girl, and making eyes at the junior officer in the overdraft department. Her weekends were filled with more shopping sprees and the inevitable matinee show. With her 'group', she'd plan outings—lunch at 'Woodlands' followed by a Mithun Chakravorty film, followed by a *paani-puri* at Shetty's, ending with the long, gossipy bus ride home

Back in the tiny overcrowded space of a cramped three-room apartment, Tarla would be fussed over by her adoring mother, who'd promptly rush to make her a cup of *masala* tea. Tarla, animated and full of laughter, would recount the exploits of her day and show off her newest bargains—platform heels from Stylish Footwear, a shiny rexine sling-bag from handbag counter at Sahakari Bazaar, and the latest plum shade of lipstick from Gala: The brothers would crowd around admiringly while Tarla spun amusing stories about the doings of her boss Office gossip laced with Pramod Chakravorty dialogues. She wasn't in a hurry to get married Far from it. She was enjoying herself, was happy with her 'group', was content with her weekend entertainment. Plus, there was that Ramesh Deo-like junior officer in the overdraft department to think about. Strangely enough, her parents weren't breathing down her neck either, though there was the occasional hint thrown in her direction about her cousin from Bhavnagar ("five years younger") whose *mangni* had been finalized the previous week, and what a good catch they'd bagged for her and so on Tarla would brush it off with her usual 'what's the hurry' attitude.

Till one day her maternal uncle turned up with a match that sounded promising. The 'boy' (in India, even a 55-year bachelor is referred to as a 'boy'), was a chartered accountant, very respectable family, no liabilities, sober tastes, good career ahead and what's more, he was looking for a working wife. No special reason for the preference, just that these days it was equally important for a woman to have a life (and salary) of her own. No harm in arranging an informal meeting, everybody agreed. Tarla, half-reluctant, half-curious, went along with the plan, wore her best Garden chiffon saree and platform sandals, and arrived at her uncle's home looking, if not ravishingly beautiful, at least fresh and radiant. The 'boy' wasn't too bad either, a bit short perhaps, but without her platforms, they'd be OK together. They were 'allowed' to converse privately, and she rather liked the sound of his voice, he made her laugh and he didn't stare greedily at her ample bosom, as most of the others had done—they met a few more times and the marriage plans were finalised.

All her brothers pitched in to give their darling sister a really splendid send-off. They'd complied with all the "requests" put forward by her in-laws. It was mutually agreed that an official "dowry" was out. Oh no, they were very broad-minded and civilised about it. It wasn't "modern" to talk in terms of "dowry" and all that—but to suggest a few household articles was certainly not a crime. Nothing very much—a refrigerator for their convenience (after all she was the one who was used to drinking chilled water), a scooter (they'd need it to go shopping or to the movies), a steel almirah (where would they be able to accommodate all her sarees—and she had so many of them), and a few odds and ends—perhaps a TV on their first anniversary. Nothing much, but enough to convince curious neighbours and relatives that their son wasn't going for cheap. Tarla's parents went along enthusiastically. It was a matter of proving their status and purchasing power as well. Wasn't she their only daughter—and what were her brothers for if not to give her away with honour and respect?

Tarla had been a little surprised when her husband had nixed a honeymoon. What for, he'd argued, after all, we've met several times, plus, asking for leave at this stage would mean no leave later, why waste money which could be better spent? Disappointed (after all, even her cousin from Bhavnagar had gone to Kashmir for 15 days), Tarla had sulked a bit, but soon forgotten the denied trip. They moved in with his parents, where he assured her they'd lead independent lives since his parents weren't the "interfering" kind. Apprehensive, but not hostile, she decided, 'what the hell, it won't be all that bad. Besides, I'll be out of the house and at my bank the whole day anyway'.

The first shock came when at the end of the month, the husband quietly requested her to hand over her pay packet to his mother. She was completely taken aback. Why? she demanded. He explained patiently: "A joint family means a joint income. We can't be selfish and keep the money for ourselves. Even I hand over my pay to her and she decides on how to spend the money. It's only fair, after all, she runs the house, not you." Not too convinced, and yet too timid to argue, she reluctantly handed over her precious salary. "But what about my own expenses? My railway pass has to be renewed. I need new saree petticoats. I've already booked some silver bangles at the jewellery counter in the Super Bazaar." "You will have to ask *ba*," he replied briefly, and left the room. Too embarrassed to demand "pocket money," Tarla let it go, determined to set things right the following month. She went through that month, making do with the few rupees she had left over from the previous month, plus the small amount she withdrew from her savings account.

Later, the same month, her mother-in-law informed her that the servant was going on an indefinite leave from next month, and that she'd have to "adjust" her timings so that the housework could get done. "After all, these days career women get off too lightly and use their jobs as an excuse to shirk their responsibilities to the home." She half-believed what she was hearing and determined to thrash it out with her husband. "Look, I can't cope with both the jobs—it's too much... besides well, besides, I think I'm pregnant." Her husband reacted with horror, "So soon?" he wailed as if he had had nothing to do with the whole business and ran to break the news to mama. Mama assumed an air of eternal martyrdom and said with weary sarcasm, "I thought she was a modern girl who knew about family planning... Anyway, what's happened has happened. We'll see."

The servant left, and Tarla was

reminded once again of her 'duties'. "From tomorrow you will have to get up at 5 am to fill the water. Finish washing the clothes before the others get up, and then start preparing the lunch." She heard all this wordlessly, angry tears welling up in her eyes. She stormed into her room to tell her husband about the latest instructions. "Why can't we employ a part-time servant? With both our salaries, surely we can afford one? What's the point in earning if we are going to make life a hell for ourselves?" "Calm down," he told her, "*Ba* won't like it if we employ someone. It's her house and her decision. Plus, you know how fussy she is about servants. She won't get along with anyone we bring in and that will lead to further tension." And so, Tarla, with her tummy growing by the hour, as it were, began her new routine, of struggling sleepily out of bed at 5 am and falling back into it in an exhausted heap around 11 pm.

What she hadn't bargained for was the work that was expected of her once she got home, after jostling her way through a crowded compartment. Before she could even throw her bag down, her mother-in-law would be ready with a set of precise instructions—ironing, washing the tea things, getting dinner ready, washing up later, making the beds, etc. Tarla decided that it was time to protest. She thought the best way to do it would be to have an open family discussion. Her husband asked her to keep him out of it and requested her not to aggravate *bapuji*, since he was suffering from his usual gas trouble. Also, he reminded her that she was the *bahu* of the family, and it was a part and parcel of her *kartavya* to obey the code laid down by the mother-in-law. She tried. And she lost. Naturally. There was simply no question of hiring any help. As the daughter-in-law, she had to do the housework. "Do I also have to hand over every paisa that I earn?" a strange voice from Tarla's throat managed to escape. "You dare to ask me that?" her mother-in-law exploded. "Do you think I eat up your precious *pagaar*? Don't I spend it on the house?" "But what about me? I need a few things too," Tarla, still determined to make her point, continued the arguments. "As far as I can see—you need nothing. You are far too spoilt, far too pampered in your mother's house. Remember, you aren't staying there any more. You have enough sarees—more than enough. We never had so many in our time. When I think you really need something, I'll give you the money. After all, I'm not an unreasonable woman."

Tarla's baby was born in a small nursing home near her mother's house. According to the custom, her parents paid for everything. Her in-laws were disappointed and showed it, because she hadn't produced a male child. They came to see her once and left a token of Rs 11. They didn't seem to be in too much of a hurry to have her back with them and told her to take her time. They didn't forget to remind her to continue to send her pay packet home. Resenting it bitterly, the next month, she kept half the salary for herself. She needed it for the baby's things. Baby's things were expensive. Milk powder, talc, cream, even bottles—everything added up. Her husband came to see her promptly and asked somewhat sheepishly. "Didn't you give all the money to *ba* this time?" She flared up and angrily lashed out at him: "How dare you ask me? You haven't bought the baby so much as a rattle yourself—isn't she your child too? I will *not* give another paisa to *ba*—tell her that. Not now, not in future." He left quickly, adding, "Don't forget to hand over your bonus to her though." He didn't wait long enough to hear her curse.

Her return "home" was far from joyous. *Ba* cribbed about the space the baby's things occupied. The baby's constant crying in the night bothered her, she hated to see soiled nappies lying around. She told Tarla that she'd have to extend her leave and stay home some more. Left with no option, Tarla did just that and was granted leave without pay. Increasingly, the tension mounted. While Tarla tried frantically to complete the house work and bathe and feed the baby on time, *ba* decided that her back was bothering her and took to her bed. Not only did Tarla have to manage the household chores single-handedly, she now had to look after her mother-in-law's comforts—help her to the bathroom, wash her clothes, give her meals in bed and so on. Her husband was sympathetic, but firm. "Of course, it's hard. But who else can do the work?" To add to her despair, a post-card arrived from the servant's village to say he wouldn't be coming back.

How many months was it since she'd last seen a film? Gone for a walk by the sea? Listened uninterrupted to music? Bought herself a lipstick? Had her eyebrows tweezed? How many months since she'd had the time to even think or dream? She'd fall into an exhausted stupor every night only to awake with a jolt each time the baby wet and cried, so that she wouldn't disturb the rest. Her sarees were faded, her petticoats frayed at the edges. She no longer wore her platforms, she didn't have to. She no longer went anywhere. Or saw any of her old friends. Gone were the lights from her eyes, the teasing tone from her voice. After the baby, her once ripe and shapely figure sagged and drooped—as did the corners of her once laughing mouth. She sleepwalked through the day and stifled screams through the night. Is this what she'd married for? Was this the price she was being compelled to pay for wearing a *mangalsutra* around her neck—a *mangalsutra* which was fast becoming a noose?

One day, Tarla grabbed her baby, grabbed a few belongings, grabbed the nearest taxi, and went home. To her *real* home. She is still there. Are her problems over? No. They have just begun. ■

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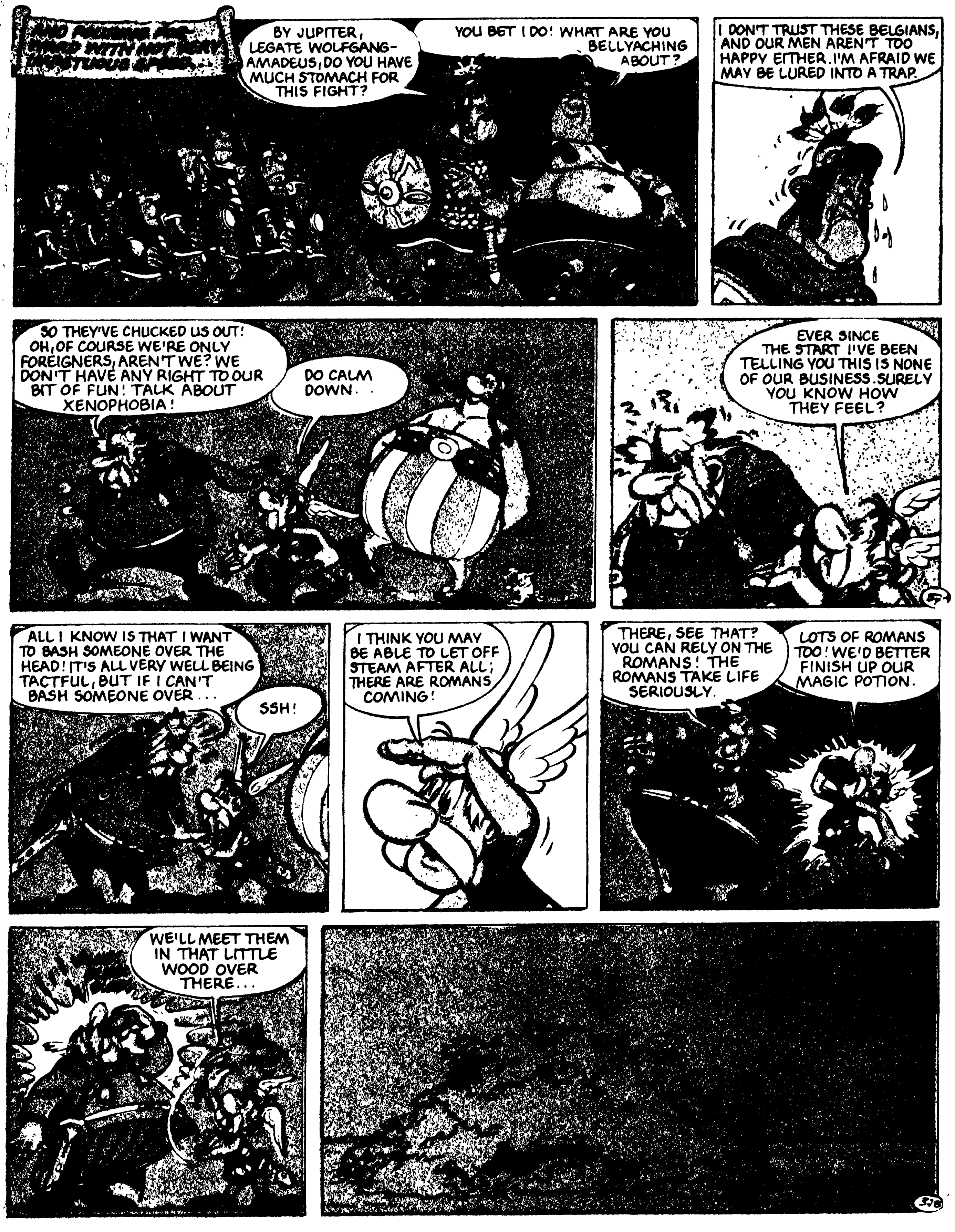
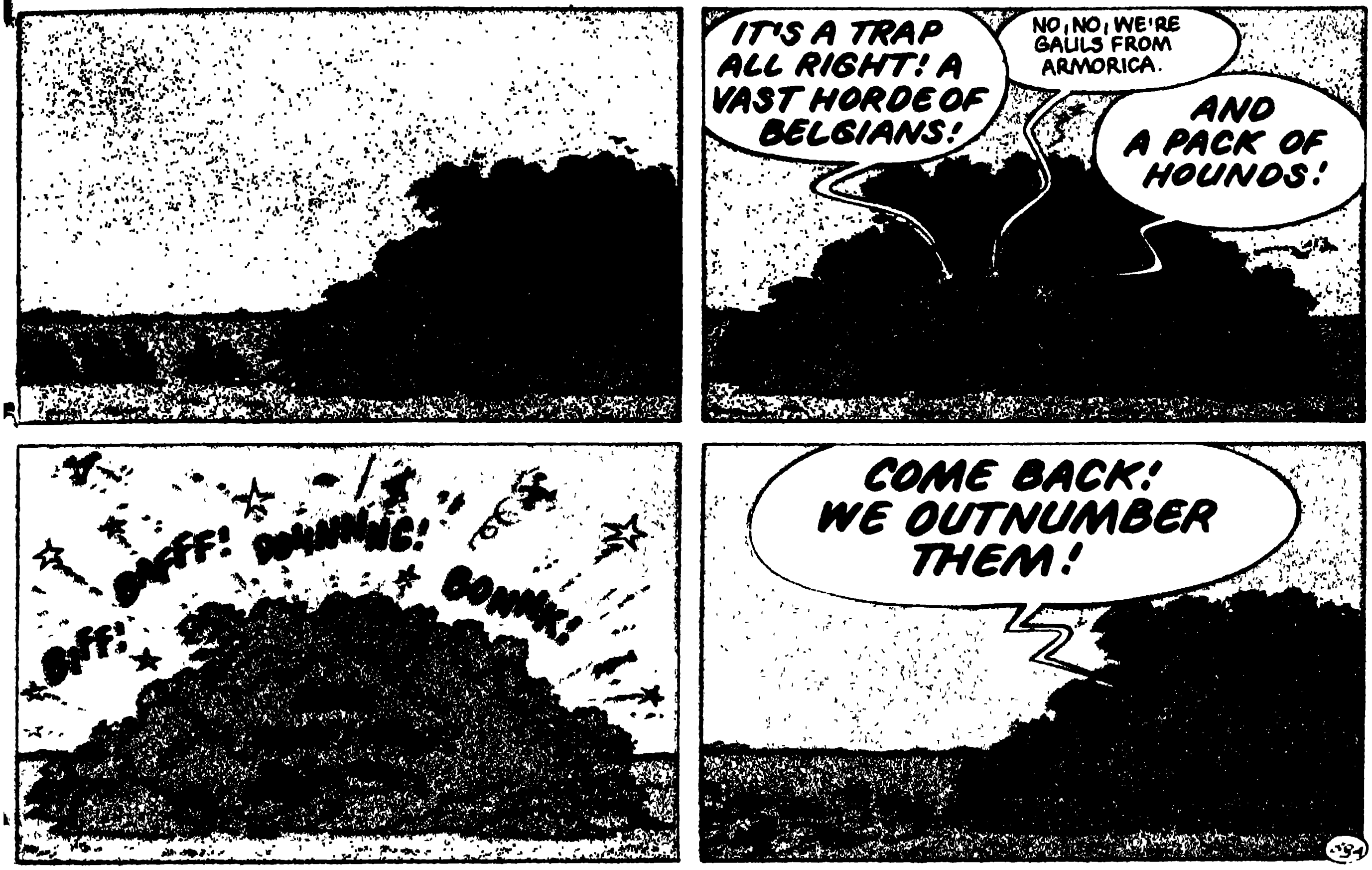
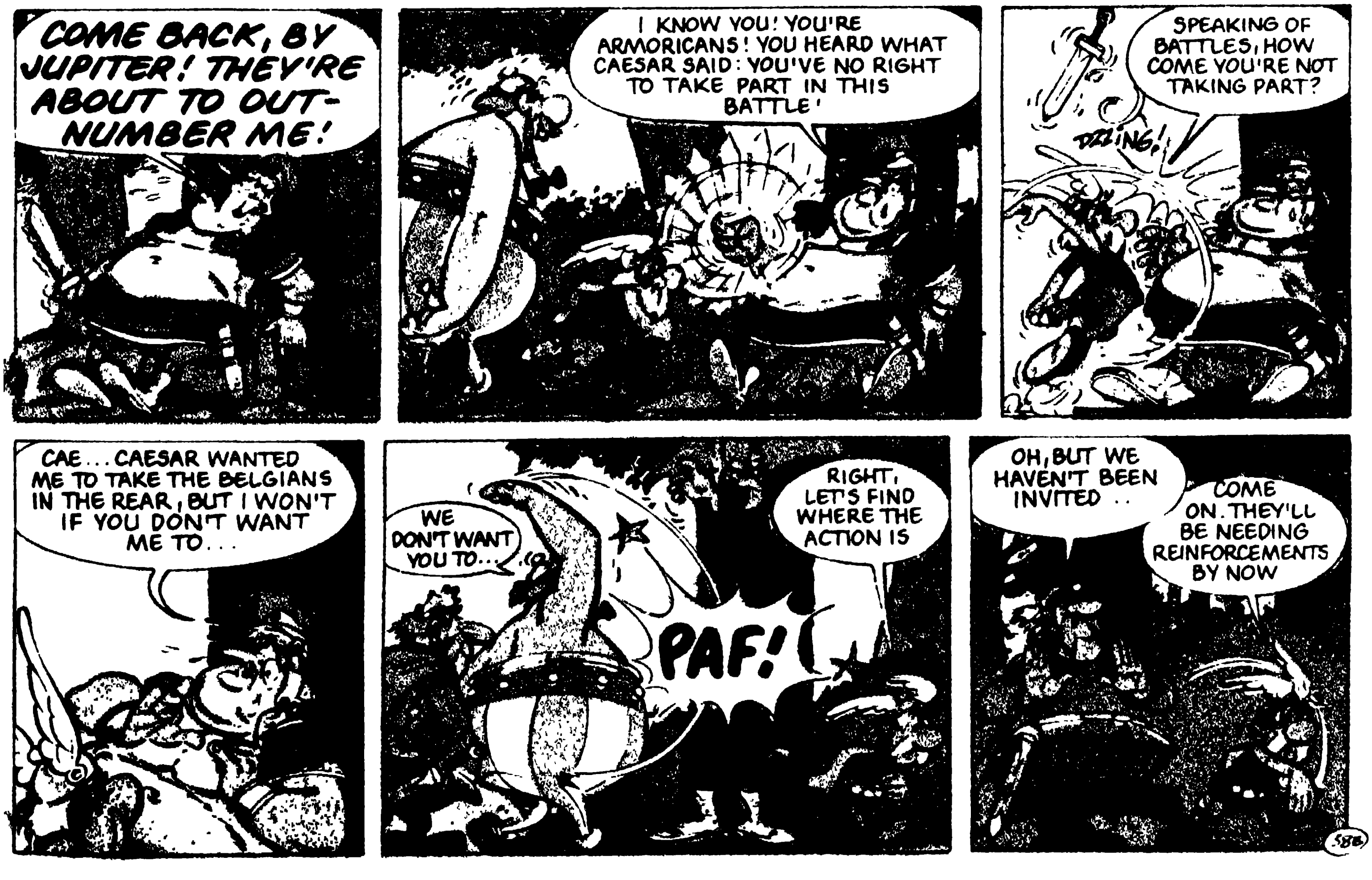
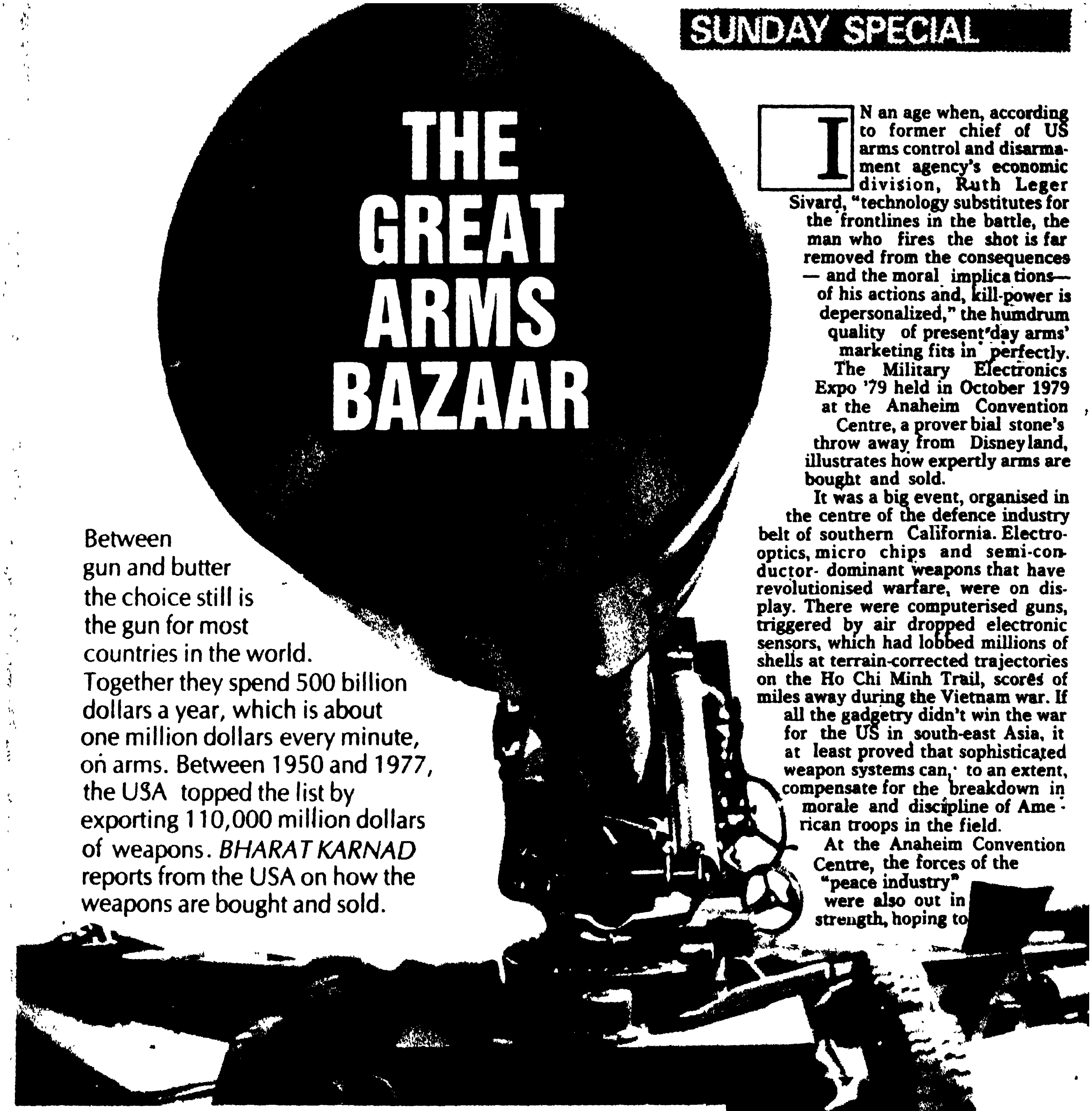

AND [illegible] WITH NOT VERY IMPETUOUS [illegible]
BY JUPITER, LEGATE WOLFGANG-AMADEUS, DO YOU HAVE MUCH STOMACH FOR THIS FIGHT?
YOU BET I DO! WHAT ARE YOU BELLYACHING ABOUT?
I DON'T TRUST THESE BELGIANS, AND OUR MEN AREN'T TOO HAPPY EITHER. I'M AFRAID WE MAY BE LURED INTO A TRAP.
SO THEY'VE CHUCKED US OUT! OH, OF COURSE WE'RE ONLY FOREIGNERS, AREN'T WE? WE DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO OUR BIT OF FUN! TALK ABOUT XENOPHOBIA!
DO CALM DOWN...
EVER SINCE THE START I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU THIS IS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS. SURELY YOU KNOW HOW THEY FEEL?
ALL I KNOW IS THAT I WANT TO BASH SOMEONE OVER THE HEAD! IT'S ALL VERY WELL BEING TACTFUL, BUT IF I CAN'T BASH SOMEONE OVER...
SSH!
I THINK YOU MAY BE ABLE TO LET OFF STEAM AFTER ALL; THERE ARE ROMANS COMING!
THERE, SEE THAT? YOU CAN RELY ON THE ROMANS! THE ROMANS TAKE LIFE SERIOUSLY.
LOTS OF ROMANS TOO! WE'D BETTER FINISH UP OUR MAGIC POTION.
WE'LL MEET THEM IN THAT LITTLE WOOD OVER THERE...


IT'S A TRAP ALL RIGHT! A VAST HORDE OF BELGIANS!
NO, NO, WE'RE GAULS FROM ARMORICA.
AND A PACK OF HOUNDS!
BIFF! BAFF! DOINNNG! BONK!
COME BACK! WE OUTNUMBER THEM!


COME BACK, BY JUPITER! THEY'RE ABOUT TO OUT-NUMBER ME!
I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE ARMORICANS! YOU HEARD WHAT CAESAR SAID: YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO TAKE PART IN THIS BATTLE!
SPEAKING OF BATTLES, HOW COME YOU'RE NOT TAKING PART?
DZING!
CAE... CAESAR WANTED ME TO TAKE THE BELGIANS IN THE REAR, BUT I WON'T IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO...
WE DON'T WANT YOU TO...
PAF!
RIGHT, LET'S FIND WHERE THE ACTION IS
OH, BUT WE HAVEN'T BEEN INVITED..
COME ON. THEY'LL BE NEEDING REINFORCEMENTS BY NOW
58B



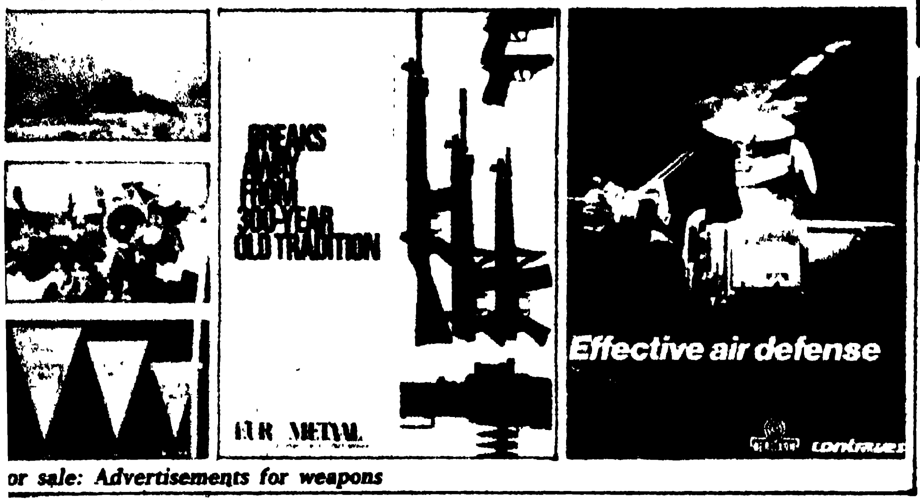
THE GREAT ARMS BAZAAR

Between gun and butter the choice still is the gun for most countries in the world. Together they spend 500 billion dollars a year, which is about one million dollars every minute, on arms. Between 1950 and 1977, the USA topped the list by exporting 110,000 million dollars of weapons. *BHARAT KARNAD* reports from the USA on how the weapons are bought and sold.

IN an age when, according to former chief of US arms control and disarmament agency's economic division, Ruth Leger Sivard, "technology substitutes for the frontlines in the battle, the man who fires the shot is far removed from the consequences — and the moral implications— of his actions and, kill-power is depersonalized," the humdrum quality of present'day arms' marketing fits in perfectly. The Military Electronics Expo '79 held in October 1979 at the Anaheim Convention Centre, a proverbial stone's throw away from Disneyland, illustrates how expertly arms are bought and sold.

It was a big event, organised in the centre of the defence industry belt of southern California. Electro-optics, micro chips and semi-conductor- dominant weapons that have revolutionised warfare, were on display. There were computerised guns, triggered by air dropped electronic sensors, which had lobbed millions of shells at terrain-corrected trajectories on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, scores of miles away during the Vietnam war. If all the gadgetry didn't win the war for the US in south-east Asia, it at least proved that sophisticated weapon systems can, to an extent, compensate for the breakdown in morale and discipline of American troops in the field.

At the Anaheim Convention Centre, the forces of the "peace industry" were also out in strength, hoping to disrupt the proceedings. A Buddhist contingent set up a muffled chant accompanied by the striking of a gong placed in front of a large picture of the mushroom cloud. Two groups called "Quakers for Peace" and "Christian Clergy and Laity Against War" attempted to engage those going into the hall in discussion, failing which they tried to block the doorway with their bodies. Many protesters were hauled by the police and whisked away. Perhaps, because of the protes-



or sale: Advertisements for weapons

ters and the memory of how they had managed to gain entry and create problems at the Defence Technology Expo in Chicago in early 1979, admission was restricted. Everyone's credentials were checked and rechecked. As a foreign newsman, I underwent a rigorous scrutiny before getting a pass.

I first called at the US customs office of investigations booth, just to gain an insight into the mechanics of the US arms trade with third world countries (which had grown from about $ 640 million in 1970 to $ 3.6 billion in 1978—nearly a six-fold increase in eight years). Tom Neill, a customs investigator who spoke to me, was all candour but declined to be recorded on tape. "That way," he said, "I can speak easier."

US arms transactions are carried out in three ways—foreign military sales, direct military aid (both of which are inter-government deals) and commercial arms sales involving private American companies and foreign governments. Not all of the commercial sales are illegal, but most often foreign countries, especially the developing ones, try to evade the export control regulations, by procuring clandestine licensing and other manufacturing arrangements. American companies are generally more worried about increasing sales than heeding Washington's policy of controlling the spread of sophisticated military technology. The office of investigations keeps an eye on customers who are likely to hoodwink US rules. The commercial arms sales accounted for no more than $ 230 million of the $ 3 6 billion in 1978, but some interesting patterns did emerge. Mr Neill cited an example: The US government denied Pakistan a nosecone radar locating system that would have greatly helped to bolster Pakistan Air Force's first or pre-emptive strike capability. Undeterred, Islamabad surreptitiously entered into a contract with Veradyne Inc., a southern California company producing ultra-sophisticated airborne search-scan systems, to manufacture the unit in Pakistan under a no-loss, cash-out front, multi-million dollar, one-year licence. The customs people, alerted by military intelligence, acquired proof of the shady practices, including laundering of money, dummy companies and bogus accounts, that had made the deal possible. Veradyne was forced to abandon the contract but not before a system prototype was wired into a Pakistani Mirage. Unfortunately for Pakistan, that particular combat aircraft was among the first casualties of air action in the western sector during the 1971 war with India.

The Anaheim Convention Centre looked less like an armoury than a science fair. Silicon photodiodes used in guidance paraphernalia of "smart bombs," horizon pipers and scanning radiometer systems for military reconnaissance and communication satellites, high transmission UV filters, miniature channel multipliers—smaller than cigarettes—used for "scintillation imaging" in advanced targeting modes, were there for everybody to see and select. Super pyroelectric infra-red detector sensors, no bigger than the top of a human thumb, that can signal the presence of enemy personnel with unerring accuracy, Milspec (Military Specification) computers that run the IBCS (Integrated Battlefield Control System) which has a host of functions—among them the direction of fire power and the computation of logistics—plasma display terminals, lens complexes for night vision and compact laser units that provide "zero error" terminal guidance for RTVs (Remotely Targeted Vehicles) and other in-flight targetable ordnance were also on display. The technical sophistication of items was such that only a professional could understand what a microchip here, a semiconductor there, or a digital signal processer in the third booth, meant singly, or how, when conjoined, they became a deadly weapon system.

Most American companies manufacturing these gadgets keep a safe distance from the press which is prone to play them up as "death mongers." These companies go out of their way to promote the opposite image by giving maximum publicity to their research and development efforts alone. To crystal filter modules they attribute the quality of improving hi-fi stereo units when, in reality, they are an integral part of the Fleetsatcom (Fleet Satellite Communications) system. Thermopiles, used in intelligence-gathering devices, are publicised as components for more reliable burglar alarms! The efficacy of the Carbondioxide laser in surgical operation on sensitive areas of the body, like the head and the neck, is strongly stressed without saying much about its weapon-guidance capability. The point is that the very components that are assembled into an electronic "pong" game found in any penny arcade, or the digital wristwatch, are precisely the things that make high-technology battlefield systems possible.

This technology provides US policymakers with the confidence they are currently using in their dealings with the Soviets. This superiority in military electronics is heavily cultivated by the American defence department's office of research and engineering (DDRE), whose $ 10 billion plus annual budgets, according to Colonel Lowman of the land war office, are largely committed to maintaining this qualitative lead. Evidence of this at the Expo was provided by the presence of such units as the US army ERADCOM (Electronic Research And Development Command), boasting of seven laboratories with 4,000 employees, which made available information on successful projects like developing "spookers" to neutralize incoming laser munitions, helicopter-mounted SOTAS (Stand-off Target Acquisition System) and weapons capable of locking in on targets beyond the formal edge of the battlefield in all-weather day and night conditions. Also, there was the US army SATCOM (Satellite Communications) agency, handing out innocuous details about the tactical satellite communications programme it has developed and the Global Positioning System (GPS) which will provide "universal navigational and positioning" help geared to "specific user requirements" that could as easily be used by large air arms as infantrymen carrying portable GPS packs into action.

Stalls occupied by the industry giants such as General Dynamics, Textron, McDonnell Douglas, Raytheon, etc., were glittering affairs with sleek audio-visual sets and sales display modules, streamlined consoles and mock-ups of their star products. Hughes Aircraft, for example, had an electronic model of a part of the air defence radar network it has installed in NATO countries. This model had all the real components, like computer terminals, data linkups and mycroprocessors, the size of playing cards, which allow for an unprecedented level of automation of military systems now extant. Smaller companies, sub-sub-contractors to the larger concerns, specialising in soft ware and miniaturised components, in silicon chips and microphonics, in fibre-optic communication relay modes and misguidance systems that transmit incorrect angle information to enemy tracking radars, were depending upon pretty salesgirls to invite attention to their products. ("Interested in packing power?" was how one attractive saleswoman broached the topic of power-pack her company manufactured.") One small Sunnyvale company, making a name for itself in computer peripherals, even had a Sperry-Rand computer hooked up to take on anyone in chess. It defeated challengers to the delight of its young programmer. Elsewhere in the Convention Hall, superstars of the industry held court.

A number of seminars and discussions were organised and well attended. People like Simon Ramo of TRW, known as "Father of EW (Electronic Warfare)" and responsible for many important advances in EW, ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) and ECCM (Electronic Counter Countermeasures), were driven to exasperation by juniors talking to about such things as "enhanced parameters for threat upgrade" and "system protection." All the same, they managed to smile and nod and pat persons on their backs.

There was a noticeable foreign presence at the Expo; Koreans, Filipinoes, Arabs of sundry nationalities and even an Indian or two. Military attache types in blazers and tinted glasses roamed all over, listening to the sales talk hurled at them. With the prospect of lucrative deals, the companies participating in the Expo were solicitous towards these people. And they should well have been. A corporation like Northrop, for example, the top arms exporter and tenth largest defence contractor in fiscal 1977, sold over $ 853 million worth of armaments overseas, representing 81.5% of the total value of Northrop's Pentagon contracts. ■

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CONVERSATIONS

"The future depends on children"

James P. Grant, executive director, UNICEF, has over 30 years of experience with economic development issues in low-income countries of Asia. He knows the problems of children well, having spent most of his childhood in Asia (he was born in China in 1922). ***Tirthankar Ghosh*** *met him in Calcutta recently to talk about the work the UNICEF is doing. Excerpts:*

Q: You have spent a lot of your life in this part of the world. You have been in China and have also spent a lot of time in India. What according to you are the problems of children?

A: Let me start by saying that UNICEF really has three overlapping missions. First we started out by what we in UNICEF call the "loud emergencies"—the consequences of war. We started out feeding children in Europe. In the immediate post-war period we were also active in Japan and China. This was the whole post-world war II era. It continues to be very active in these "loud emergencies" most notably in Kampuchea, Cambodia where UNICEF has been the lead agency in the United Nations system in bringing that country back from the edge of a holocaust quite successfully. The second mission of UNICEF, one that you are more concerned with, is what we call the "silent emergency." These are the nearly 10,000 small children that die in India each day as a consequence of gross poverty, lack of access to basic education, basic health services...worldwide there are some 15 million small children who die each year. Take for example the International Year of the Child (IYC) in 1979. Just barely a year later, more than 1 out of every 10 of those children are already dead. And the prime function we have set is how to deal with this set of problems which requires a developmental response—requires helping villages develop health services, education, safe water as distinguished from the "loud emergencies" which is relief effort.

Third, since 1979, the UN General Assembly has, following the IYC, charged UNICEF with in effect being the child's advocate everywhere in the world with respect to development progress and this applies to industrial countries as well as developing countries. Our work in this field is symbolised best probably by the major campaign we are now launching in support of breast feeding around the world in industrial countries as well as developing countries because of the great benefits it brings to the child.

James Grant

We also make a major effort to educate governments and the public to the fact that investment in the health and education of children is really one of the best investments a country can make. Any educated family man knows that educating his children, keeping them in good health is not only a thing called for by love but it makes very good economic sense for the family. Most countries still treat these kinds of expenditures, in the health and education of children, as being "soft" and if there is a budget cut, these are what get cut. There have been some interesting studies that have just been released by the World Bank—which indicates—that if the country will invest in primary education—in a low-income level country like India—you can expect on an average a 27% return which is a much better return than you will get from a fertiliser factory, etc.

But you must put that over a 20-year period to get that kind of a return. These are very significant returns from education and the same World Bank study concluded that if an average country were to take 1% of its GNP and shift it from factories and roads and ports into primary schools and into non-formal education then at the end of 20 years the per capita income will be 6% higher than if that money were put into the more traditional forms of investment. Also what we have found out is that where the investment is in primary schools and primary health care the economic return is much higher over time than investment in universities.

Possibly the single best health measure you can take is to educate young women and then this sharply reduces the infant mortality rates. There is also a very sharp drop in birth rates. These are all part of the advocacies that UNICEF does to help convince governments. What every family knows is that really the future depends upon children.

Q: What are the UNICEF's future plans in India?

A: In India, we are considering at the May meeting of the UNICEF board the largest single programme we've ever decided for a country. This is our $150m programme for the next 3 years. You get some idea of it when you realise what a major increase this is. Between 1949, when we started here and 1980, UNICEF provided India with $ 228m of assistance. Now we are talking for the next 3 years about a $150m.

Q: Why is UNICEF planning to provide so much aid? There must be a reason.

A: Part of it happened because UNICEF's resources are increasing. We have more to allocate. Also it is very clear that there are major opportunities to do good work in India. To give two or three examples of major ongoing programmes: UNICEF has been very deeply involved in rural safe water drinking programmes and we have assisted the government of India in the drilling of some 50,000 tubewells in recent years. This programme will continue and be expanded. We are also very deeply involved in assisting the government of India in the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS). These are blocks in which for each 1,000 people a woman is selected from the community who then makes a survey of the nutritional situation of children under six years in the community.

Q: How do you expect the government to cooperate? What are your problems in working with governments? Since you are a much larger, worldwide body don't you find it difficult to operate?

A: Working with governments everywhere has many difficulties and many problems. On the other hand the beneficial results can be very large indeed. Take for example the ICDS. And UNICEF, by the very fact that it works with governments under so many diverse circumstances has become relatively able to be of assistance even under difficult conditions. The greatest and most difficult place we helped is the case of Kampuchea. Here is a situation of warfare continuing but UNICEF has been able to make a major contribution in helping bring that country back from the edge of national disaster.

Q: UNICEF has as its goal not only children's survival but also the opportunity for them to realise their potential, to enjoy basic rights and privileges embodied in the International Declaration of the Rights of children. Do you think this is being followed in India?

A: UNICEF's primary focus has been on survival, health etc and we have been less involved with "the rights of the child." It is only in recent times that UNICEF has become involved in or concerned with the work practices of children. And at the moment it still remains a secondary aspect to our work where we concentrate first and foremost on the survival aspects and the development aspects of children. ■

A visit of no consequence

Disagreements between India and Britain remain despite Mrs Thatcher's visit

New Delhi: They agreed to disagree. This seems to be the outcome of two days of talks between the British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher and Mrs Indira Gandhi in New Delhi. Not that much hope was pinned on Mrs Thatcher's visit. No one expected wonders. And that's the way it ended. There was not even a joint communique or a joint statement. Just five memoranda of understanding for which Mrs Thatcher need not have come all the way to India.

After the preliminary ritual of niceties when the British Prime Minister landed, Mrs Gandhi set the ball rolling at the airport itself by saying, "There are many problems between us." The problems mainly were: Britain's Nationality Bill; Militarisation of the Indian Ocean; American arms supply to Pakistan and the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. After nearly three hours of private talks between the two Prime Ministers without any aides and two rounds of official-level talks, differences remained on all these issues.

Mrs Thatcher was told of the strong Indian reaction to Britain's Nationality Bill and discrimination against the non-white immigrants. But Mrs Thatcher defended her country's race and immigration policies. Though she did say that she had tried to allay the fears among Indians, her statement that, "Every country has the right to determine who shall be its citizen" was a clear indication of her intention to go ahead with the Bill. In all fairness, Britain must have the final say on who shall be its citizen. Indians do not have the birthright to settle in the United Kingdom. But do Australians and Canadians (both Commonwealth countries like India) have that right? There was no agreement on this.

Mrs Thatcher with Mrs Gandhi

On American arms supply to Pakistan, Mrs Thatcher, who visited Washington early this year, more than defended her ally across the Atlantic. India has armed itself heavily over the years, so why shouldn't Pakistan? And more so, since Pakistan's neighbour Afghanistan is now occupied by foreign forces. "If I had Soviet troops on my border, I too would be concerned," was what Mrs Thatcher said. "Each nation has the right to defend its borders, its people. For this it needs arms. The same must apply to Pakistan."

What is surprising is that on the one hand she defended the USA arming Pakistan, while on the other, she said that the Reagan administration was yet to evolve a foreign policy. Is not the decision to arm Pakistan a part of the US foreign policy? There can be no question of the yet-to-be-formulated US foreign policy. Equally forthright was Mrs Thatcher's denunciation of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. The Soviet occupation was not acceptable to Britain and she said that the Soviet troops must be withdrawn. How can a non-aligned country like India accept the occupation of another non-aligned country by foreign forces? asked Mrs Thatcher. She was ably assisted by the British press. A British journalist who accompanied Mrs Thatcher to India talked of the Russian influence in India. In his despatch he wrote,"The sight of Russian military officers openly strutting about in Delhi is the most obvious sign of how close India and Moscow have become." How wrong could he be? Said an Indian foreign office spokesman, "The journalist was suffering from hallucinations."

Mrs Thatcher was equally rigid in her views on establishing a rapid deployment force for use if war broke out in a region. She was also outspoken on Diego Garcia. As far as international geo-political issues are concerned, Mrs Thatcher's visit to India does not seem to have achieved much. If anything, the gulf has merely widened. She has managed to take India further away from the influence of the West. India, is now certainly recognised as the most stable country in this part of the world. The West, therefore, cannot afford to ignore or alienate her.

The question then arises: Why did Mrs Thatcher come to India? Is it because a starved British industry is desperately in need of orders? India wants to set up a giant steel plant at Paradip, for which a British-led consortium is bidding for the billion-dollar contract. The British are bidding against the Germans. Did Mrs Thatcher raise this topic during her talks with Mrs Gandhi? She may have, but she has gone back without any promise. Similarly with the Jaguar deal. Mrs Gandhi made it clear to her counterpart that she had "an open mind" on it.

Just a couple of hours before she left New Delhi, Mrs Thatcher said at a press conference that Britain was the largest single aid donor to India. In fact, she tried to emphasise the point by saying, "You do realise that..." Was that meant to be a threat? Five low-key memoranda of understanding and a grant of Rs 169 crores to India are by no means indications of the outcome of the visit of an important head of state. These could have been achieved by sending 'secretary-level delegations.

A Special Correspondent

DACOITS

Is Malkhan Singh in Delhi?

Delhi: A terse wireless message from the Madhya Pradesh police caused a flutter in the capital's police headquarters late last month. It said: Malkhan Singh, the dreaded Chambal dacoit, was "most probably" in Delhi and necessary arrangements be made to arrest him. The message, sent to the Commissioner of Delhi police, was followed by a brief letter corroborating the wireless signal. The letter written in Hindi, was signed by Mr H. M. Joshi, Inspector-General of anti-dacoity operations in Madhya Pradesh. Convinced of the genuineness of the message, the Delhi police authorities immediately flashed it to all its 66 police stations. Even the CID wing was alerted to track down the dacoit king.

But for the policemen on the trail of the dacoit, Malkhan Singh was merely a name. They did not have his photograph or any details about his possible contacts in Delhi. A demi-official letter was thus despatched to Mr Joshi requesting details about Malkhan's contacts in Delhi and his photograph.

But the Delhi police message went unanswered. Their MP counterparts, after having started the controversy, slumped into a slumber. They did not reply the Delhi police queries till the beginning of the second week of April.

That the MP police was not serious was further proved by the fact that Mr Joshi, who visited Delhi in the last week of March made no attempt to contact either any Delhi police officer, or the commissioner, during his four-day stay.

He told an UNI reporter that his visit to Delhi was purely a "social one" and had no connection with Malkhan's alleged presence in the capital. Mr Joshi said that though there were reports that the dacoit had visited Delhi during the Congress(I) sponsored kisan rally on 16 February the "chances of his presence here are remote, though they cannot be ruled out completely." Inquiries later, however, revealed that it was not quite a social visit. It is understood that Mr Joshi had paid an official visit to Delhi and held talks with the defence authorities for procuring sophisticated arms for the anti-dacoity operations

Knowledgeable sources in Delhi maintained that the MP police merely wanted to be on record having informed their Delhi counterparts about Malkhan's possible presence in the capital. The letter, they said, was based on a news item published in *Swadesh*—a daily published from Gwalior and Indore—and was sent amid reports in the national press that Malkhan wanted to surrender before the Prime Minister. "Though the chances were bleak, had Malkhan surrendered without the knowledge of MP police it would have been very embarrassing for them," the sources said.

Sources in the Delhi police, who have conducted inquiries on their own, said they had not found any clues indicating Malkhan's presence in the capital. "Till now, it had been a wild goose chase," a senior officer quipped.

That Malkhan Singh was serious about the surrender was confirmed by a source close to an MP politician in Delhi. He quoted a report published in the 5 April issue of the *Times of India* saying that the Lok Dal leader, Mr George Fernandes, was in active contact with the dacoits in Chambal and was trying for their surrender. The source said Malkhan Singh was "very close" to a Lok Dal MLA from Bhind, in Madhya Pradesh, and if Mr Fernandes was trying for the dacoit's surrender then "reports regarding Malkhan definitely carry weight."

The fact that Malkhan's gang had not been active for the past several days further added to the credibility of the reports. It is also learnt that a letter in which Malkhan had expressed his desire to surrender had already reached Mr Arjun Singh, chief minister of Madhya Pradesh. Malkhan, the source said, sent the letter to the chief minister through a middleman. This source, however, could not confirm reports about Malkhan's presence in Delhi. He admitted that the dacoits, including Malkhan, were being patronised by some politicians but refused to agree that Malkhan was being "harboured" by a senior Congress(I) functionary in the capital.

As regards George Fernandes's role in the surrender of dacoits, the source explained that during the Emergency he was in hiding at Vijaygarh Tehsil of Morena district, a dacoit-infested area. This "link" could have possibly prompted him to work for the surrender of the dacoits.

Vinod Sharma and Jagmit Uppal

Devaraj Urs to join BJP?

New Delhi: The infighting in the Congress(U) over the question of presidentship may prove to be a boon for the Bharatiya Janata Party. Mr Devaraj Urs, the present president of the Congress(U), is keen to continue in his post but the vocal younger elements in the party are determined to instal Maharashtra's Mr Sharad Pawar as president. Mr Jagjivan Ram, the other candidate, has reportedly got the sympathies of Mr Urs, because by keeping Babuji alive in the contest Mr Urs hopes to get an extension of his term. In case that fails, he has to look for other pastures. Mrs Gandhi is not willing to take him back. At least that is the impression which was conveyed to Mr Urs's "adopted daughter," Ms Nirmala Prasad, when she recently met Mr Rajiv Gandhi. at her own instance.

Ms Nirmala Prasad feels that "Buddhi" (that is how she refers to Mr Urs), has to remain in national politics. So, with the Congress(U) possibly going the Sharad Pawar way and the Congress (I) being inhospitable, the BJP seems to her to be the only alternative left for Mr Devaraj Urs: Recently Mr Urs had a long meeting with the BJP chief, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, in New Delhi. The prospect of Mr Urs joining their party is godsent for the BJP leadership because while they have been able to build-up a party network in the south, courtesy the RSS, they do not have any senior southern politician in their ranks to make the BJP a viable party south of the Vindhyas. Mr Devaraj Urs can fill the vaccuum.

Our Delhi Correspondent

SANDHYA

Devaraj Urs

Atal Behari Vajpayee

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Cadbury's Drinking Chocolate

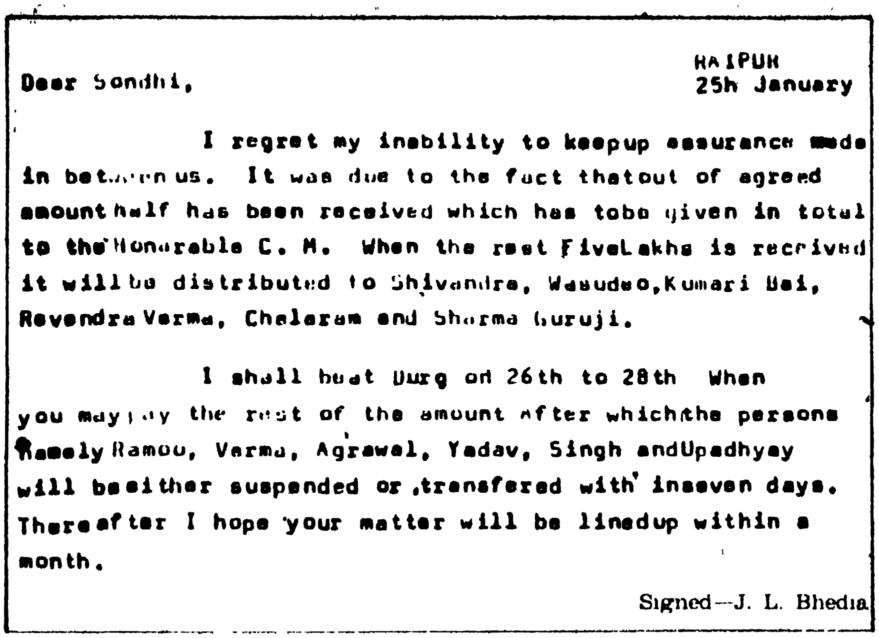
OBM/10580

The letter 'bomb'

Bhopal: A letter supposedly written by the MP minister of industries, Mr J. L. Bhedia, could not be presented in the Vidhan Sabha by the lone Lok Dal MLA Mr Rama Shankar Singh because the chair refused him permission. The dissident group of the Congress(I), however, distributed hundreds of xeroxed copies of the letter in Bhopal and New Delhi. Mr J. L. Bhedia has denied the existence of such a letter. In fact, the copies were forged, he says. In the Vidhan Sabha, he went a step further by challenging the MLA to substantiate his allegations.

The letter speaks for itself. Dated Raipur 25 January 1981, it is addressed to a certain Mr Sondhi: "Dear Sondhi, I regret my inability to keep up (the) assurance made in between us. It was due to the fact that out of agreed amount half has been received, which has to be given in total to Honourable CM. When the rest five lakhs is received it will be distributed to Shivandra, Wasudeo, Kumari Bai, Revendra Verma, Chelaram and Sharma Guruji."

The letter goes on: "I shall be at Durg on 26th to 28th (January). When you may pay the rest of the amount after which persons namely Ramoo, Verma, Agarwal, Yadav, Singh and Upadhyay will be either suspended or transferred within seven days. Thereafter I hope your matter will be lined up within a month." The letter ends with the signature of the minister.



RAIPUR
25h January

Dear Sondhi,

I regret my inability to keepup assurance made in between us. It was due to the fact thatout of agreed amount half has been received which has tobe given in total to the Honourable C. M. When the rest FiveLakhs is received it will be distributed to Shivandra, Wasudeo, Kumari Bai, Revendra Verma, Chelaram and Sharma Guruji.

I shall be at Durg on 26th to 28th When you may pay the rest of the amount after which the persons namely Ramoo, Verma, Agrawal, Yadav, Singh andUpadhyay will beeither suspended or transfered with inseven days. Thereafter I hope your matter will be linedup within a month.

Signed—J. L. Bhedia

The letter supposed to have been written by Mr Bhedia

If the letter is genuine, the contents acquire even more seriousness. Messrs Wasudeo (Rao Chandrakar), Mrs Kumari Devi (Bai Chouble), Revendra (Singh), Chelaram (Chandrakar) and (Hari Har Prasad) Sharma Guruji mentioned in the letter are all MLAs from Durg district. When Mr Sondhi was put under suspension, a few months ago, about half-a-dozen Congress(I) MLAs of Durg had flown with him to get his suspension order withdrawn. But the CM Arjun Singh did not agree to intervene in the suspension decision taken by Mr S. B. Solanki, deputy CM in charge of the irrigation portfolio. Since then, Mr Bhedia and the MLAs have been trying their utmost to get the suspension order scrapped.

The irrigation department is divided into groups supported by the rival factions of the CM and deputy CM. Messrs Ramoo, Verma, Agarwal, Yadav, Singh and Upadhyay mentioned in the letter are all executive engineers and officials of the irrigation department. Mr Sondhi and his group of officers feel that the engineers mentioned in the letter were behind his suspension by building up a case against him among the Congress(I) leaders of Bilaspur and Dr Tumanlal of Ranjnandgaon.

The lobby supporting Mr Sondhi, however, manoeuvred to get a senior engineer of Bilaspur, Mr A. L. Ramoo (mentioned in the letter), suspended. Mr Ramoo stalled the move by asking for voluntary retirement.

M. V. Kher

Nipani: a secessionist movement?

Bangalore: A speculation has gained ground in political circles that the Nipani agitation (SUNDAY 26 April) had been an elaborate excuse for stirring up trouble in the sensitive border areas between Maharashtra and Karnataka by Mr Sharad Joshi. The fact that Mr Joshi, leader of the Karnataka tobacco growers movement, is a Maharashtrian himself has merely helped to emphasise this speculation. The credit for this speculation, which is unjustified, goes to the Karnataka police's intelligence bureau. The bureau submitted a lengthy report to CM R. Gundu Rao which stated that Mr Joshi was planning to restart a border conflict. Once this idea was planted, it gained ground rapidly. But facts prove otherwise since Mr Joshi's only motive for spearheading the movement was to gain prominence as a national leader. Many in the administration, mostly those dealing with the tobacco agitation, expressed their apprehension to the press that Mr Joshi was trying to gain a foothold among the Marathi-speaking farmers of Nipani. This was denied by the farmers. In fact, the DIG, (Belgaum range), Mr Chandulal asserted: "If that is so (Mr Joshi's move to win back Belgaum), it has not been apparent." There were also allegations that Mr Joshi had concentrated his agitation in Karnataka "taking various coercive and farcical steps to embarrass the Karnataka government while no pressure had been applied on the Maharashtra chief minister." This, too, was denied by Mr Joshi and he said it was the attempt of an immoral government to wreck his movement. He pointed out that roadblocks had in fact been organised at Kapashi in Kolhapur district, Maharashtra. Moreover, Nipani was the more logical place to launch the agitation since the tobacco grown on the Maharashtra side is marketed in the Karnataka border town. Nipani was also the home of the tobacco kings.

Why then should the Karnataka government be interested in planting this border dispute story? It was used as a diversionary tactic so that public opinion on the issue would be divided. The government deliberately waited for the Assembly session to end before trying to clear the highway. Many agreed with Mr Joshi's allegation that the Karnataka government had attempted to rake up the sensitive border issue to sabotage the agitation for remunerative tobacco prices. As a young committee member of the Shetkari Sanghathana (Mr Joshi's organisation) pointed out that by "giving credence to this (border dispute) story the Karnataka government had chosen to neglect the farmers problems completely," and if the government had utilised the time spent in planting bogus stories and playing war games (he was referring to the police firing in which 12 people lost their lives), for examining the farmers problems, Nipani would not have witnessed so much bloodshed.

Louise Fernandes

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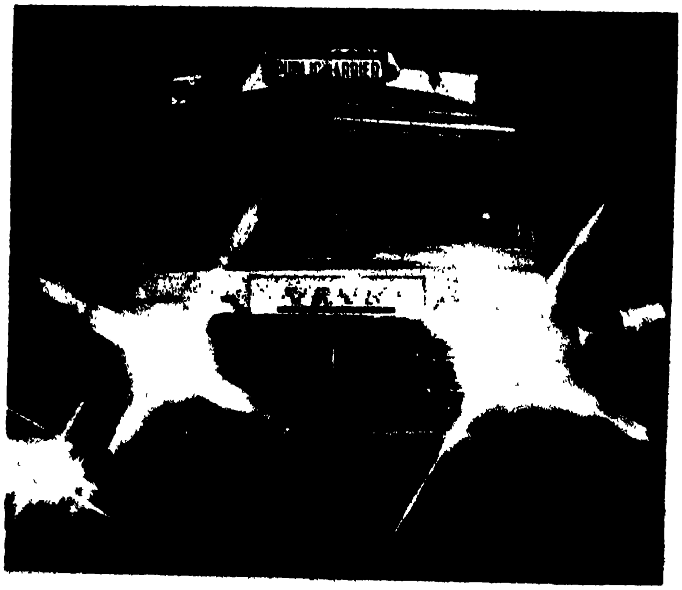

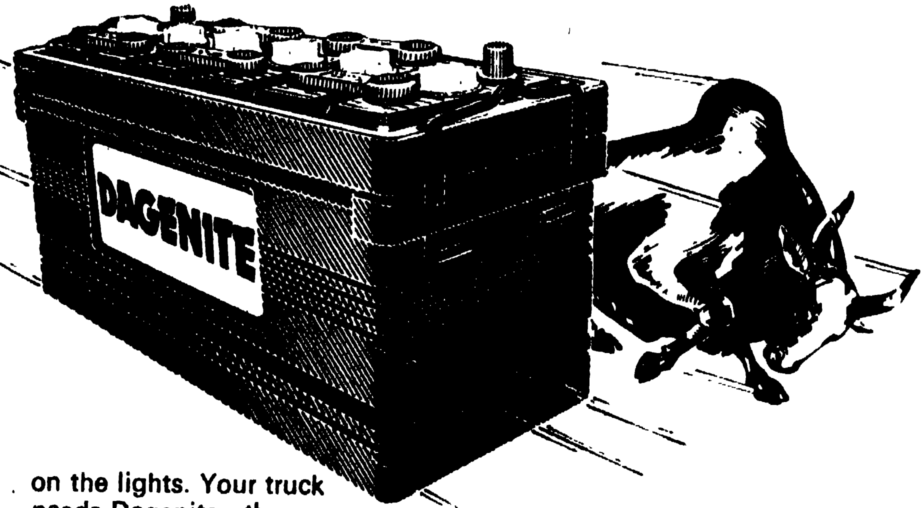

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HATE INDIA CAMPAIGN

A cassette of vulgarity

"From New Delhi is a request from Indira Gandhi. She writes that she would like us to play this song." A song begins with an extremely vulgar opening line which is crude and personally slanders the PM. This is from a cassette recording which is now being circulated by a private Pakistani company, especially in Pakistan and West Asian countries. In a country like Pakistan where the media is kept under such strict wraps, by the generals headed by Zia, such a slanderous, vulgar cassette could never have reached the shops without direct or indirect approval of the government in Islamabad. The cassette seems part of the hate-India campaign being fanned by the government of Pakistan in its desperate efforts to survive. (In fact, other political leaders who are anti-Zia are also slandered, though far less viciously.)

The cassette contains a simulated radio programme in which mainly Indian songs are played, supposedly on listeners' requests and devotes 16.5 minutes to slandering Indian politicians and other prominent Indians, with heavy sexual innuendos. But Indians are not the only ones to be made the butt of crude jokes. Others include the obvious Babrak Karmal. The extent of hate against India is shown by the fact that the cassette abuses those Pakistani cricketers who made friends in our country during their tour. We reproduce parts of this cassette—translated from Urdu. All phrases in italics are our comments: the rest is a direct transcription.

● This show is being presented by Azim Sarwar on behalf of Aliba (*unclear*) Cassette. In this funny, entertaining show, we present songs requested by world-famous people. As people write letters, requesting for songs to be played on the radio, in exactly the same way many famous personalities have written to me asking for their favourite songs. We fulfill their requests. *Loud canned music follwed by canned applause.*

...The British government recently presented a bill restricting the entry of coloured people. When this bill was passed, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, while speaking in Parliament, said: (song) "Ab yahan koi nahin, koi nahin aayega... (Now nobody, nobody will come here...)" This brings us to the end of the news. *Canned music.*

Later on there is a joke about cricketer Imran Khan, Imran did not take any wickets in one game, so he returned sadly to his hotel room. When fellow fast-bowler Sikander Bakht came into the room, he saw Imran standing by the window with a noose round his legs. Sikander asked Imran what he was up to. Imran replied that he wanted to commit suicide. Sikander then asked him why he had the noose around his feet instead of his neck. Imran replied: "Gale mein daalne se dum ghut raha tha. (When I put it round my neck, I couldn't breathe.)"

... And now a fresh news despatch from our Kabul representative. Babrak Karmal has been exiled from the country. But Russia made him the president of Afghanistan. On becoming president, Babrak Karmal thanked Moscow. In his telegram he said: (song) "Nawaze karam, shukriya meherbani, mujhe baqsh di aap ne zindagani."

... From New Delhi, a request from Indira Gandhi. She writes that she would like us to play this number: *The song which follows is so vulgar that we do not want to translate it, and it is accompanied by wolf whistles.*

There are more such vulgar jokes and comments about Indian leaders like Mr Jagjivan Ram and Mr Morarji Desai.

NAGALAND

PLA guns keep booming

Imphal: Early in the morning of 11 March 1981, a jeep of the sixth battalion of the Manipur Rifles with three armed jawans was ambushed. The jawans, taken by surprise, surrendered their rifles and 150 rounds of ammunition. Hardly a week later, the Waikong police station, 60 kms south-east of Imphal was overrun; 12 rifles, two revolvers, two walkie-talkie sets and a large quantity of ammunition were taken away.

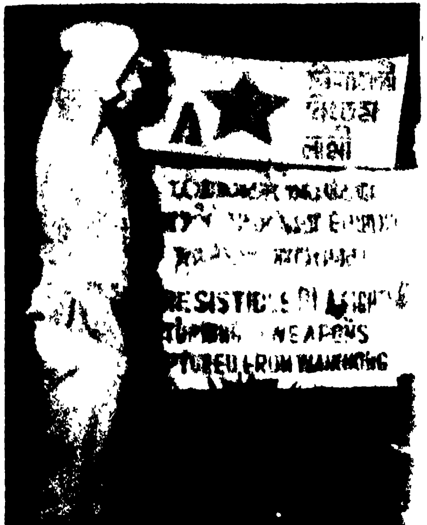
Bisheswar Singh congratulates his unit

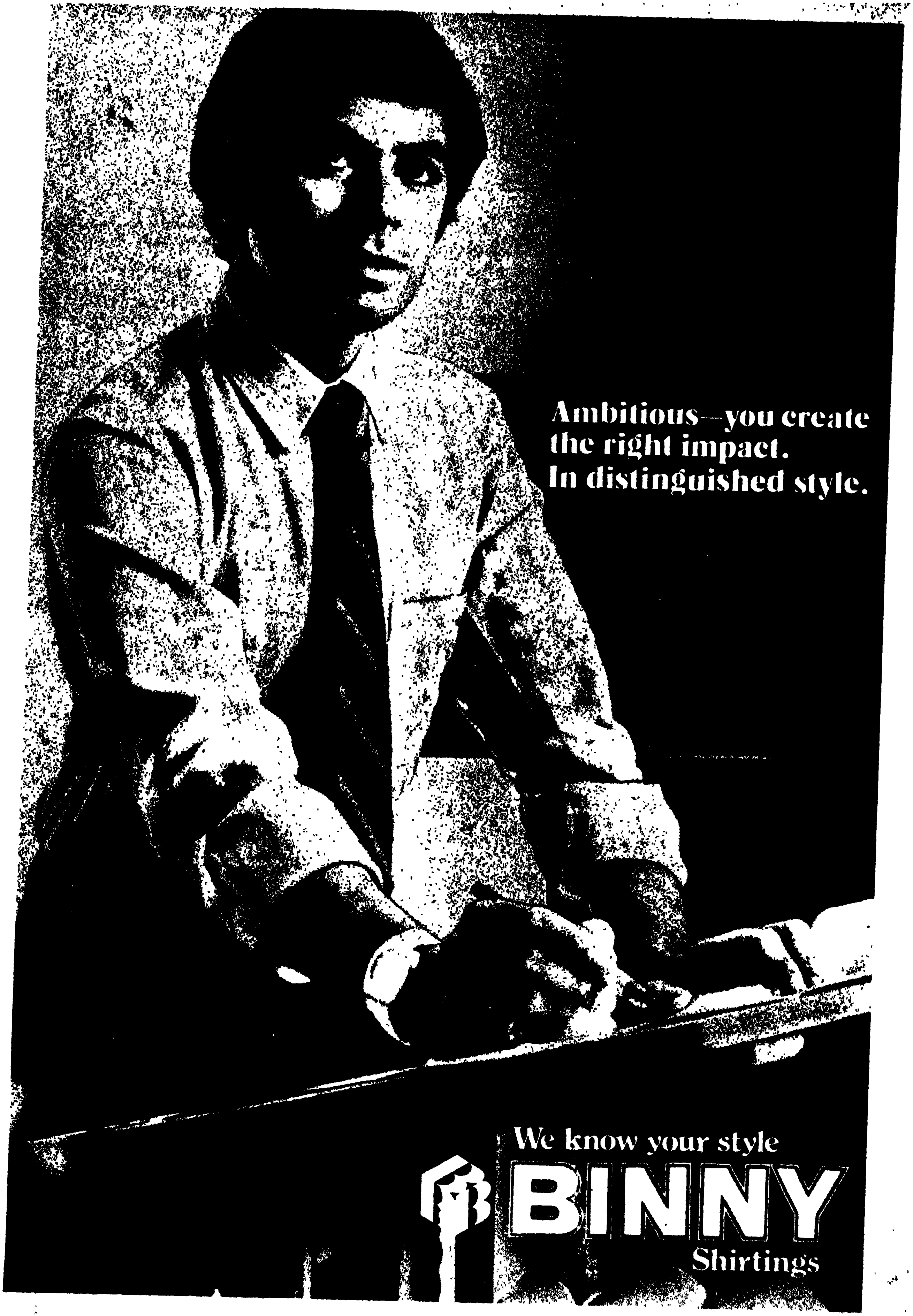
These activities were the doings of the several units of the People's Liberation Army, divided by its outlawed founder leader, Mr Bisheswar Singh. Although the leader himself is eluding the authorities, the activities of the PLA is far from surreptitious. The organisation consists mainly of unemployed youth who are apparently frustrated with the present socio-economic situation.

However, not all the activities—a part of the stepped-up guerilla activity of the PLA—go undetected. In connection with the raid at Waikong police station, a Tangkhul youth was arrested. It was also known that the raid was conducted by four Tangkhul Naga youths. But the activities continue, unabated. On the evening of 9 April, ten persons were noticed on the Keishamthong bridge. Two police jeeps passed the bridge without incident. As the third was about to pass, it was stopped by a person. Mr Romen Kumar, the additional superintendent of police and several constables proceeded to check. Suddenly, shots rang out at them. The police retaliated. In the ensuing encounter, two PLA members were killed: a 17-year-old student of the Industrial Training Institute and a 27-year-old graduate. Six others, within the age group of 17 to 23 were arrested. Jadumani, the leader of the PLA unit and an erstwhile member of the revolutionary government of Manipur, escaped with bullet injuries. The police recovered four guns, two 0.38 calibre revolvers, one country made pistol, eight rounds of ammunition and some hand grenades. Later that night, the police unearthed an 'ordnance factory' of the PLA in the house of an ex-serviceman who was in the army engineering section. The police found two high-powered bombs, detonators, some devices to blast off bridges and other implements used to make firearms.

K. C. Chaudhuri

Bisheswar Singh receiving PLA members

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Interpub/BB/1/81

Doomsday in 20 years

Bonn: The vision of horror which had until now obsessed only scientists and environmentalists, has been painted over many thousands of pages in an American study entitled *Global 2000* which, after the report of the 'Club of Rome,' has an even more urgent message to convey on the limits of growth and the impending annihilation of a large part of life on earth. Environmentalists in many Western countries, particularly in the Federal Republic of Germany, have received a bolt from the blue by the gloomy predictions of the study and have called for a number of demands which seek a "radical change" in the environment policy.

In their covering note addressed to the former American President Jimmy Carter, who ordered the study, the authors of *Global 2000* underscore their disquiet over the future of the world and mankind. In their thesis *Alarming Global Problems,* they maintain that if the present trend in development continued, the world would in 2000 be still more over-populated, dirtier and ecologically less stable and more vulnerable to disruptions, unrest and wars than it had been at the beginning of the 1980s. "Despite a larger material output, the people would be poorer in many respects than they are today," is predicted right in the introductory passage of the study.

Bombay and Calcutta are among the 15 large cities which constitute the ideal test-cases for such impending catastrophes. Large-scale unauthorised constructions, industrial expansion, air pollution, institutional breakdowns and the influx of people from the rural areas are ruining the two cities whose problems are likely to rise to gargantuan heights in the next two decades. If urgent steps are not taken to remedy the situation, life in these cities will worsen in the future. Illegal constructions in the cities is still making a headway and despite official announcements to check further industrialisation, massive expansion of the big industries was on the way. The average level of sulphur dioxide in the cities was three times the standard level acceptable by the environmental agency of the United States.

Influx from rural areas to big cities poses a major problem. It is estimated that some 200,000 people entered the city of Bombay during the last year. At the present rate of growth, it is calculated that almost 80 per cent of Bombay would become a slum in less than two decades. The situation could still be controlled, as was done in the case of Berlin, provided tougher steps are taken by the government and the citizens.

The American study sees the population explosion—this is particularly relevant to India—as the main cause for the worsening of the situation; world population is expected to touch 6.3 billion people by the year 2000. There will be 10 billion people 30 years from now, according to the study. The population of Africa, south of the Sahara, and Asia has already reached a point of saturation. The study paints visions of mass starvation and mass deaths as a consequence of the loss of arable land.

Professor Guenter Witzsch, a German who was involved in preparing the *Global 2000* study, maintains that some millions of hectares annually turn into new desert area. Professor Witzsch cites the instance of the Sahel Zone where some 650,000 square kilometres were lost over the last 50 years. The developing countries, affected by this process of desertification, would need around 4.5 billion dollars a year to check this process. Prof. Witzsch predicts that, "There is the danger that the countries of the Third World would become permanent recipients of social welfare aid."

With an ever-growing demand for water (which will increase by 200 to 300 per cent by the year 2000), the scientists responsible for the study expect a steady increase in water scarcity. Supply of drinking water will become acutely scarce, particularly in countries of Africa, South America, South Asia (countries like India, Bangladesh and Pakistan) and the Gulf states.

The scientists warn of the vicious circle in which a deterioration of the environment, caused by overpopulation, would create new conditions of life under which a reduction of the population growth would be difficult to achieve. But the time required to take any measures to prevent such conditions is, however, ticking away fast.

Manik Mehta

The end of the toy train

The Darjeeling toy train

Darjeeling: The hundred-year-old toy train is an endangered specie, thanks to the administration.

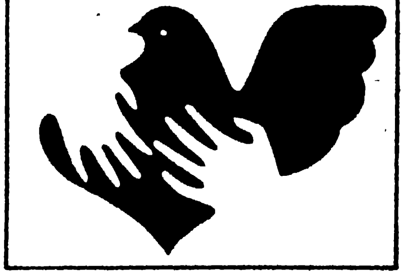
Beginning in 1880, the track for the toy train was completed in stages, by 1885. By 1914, the train was carrying on an average 250,000 passengers and 60,000 tons of freight, annually. The toy train prospered continuously till Independence, although its operational costs were always high and often claimed as much as 90 per cent of its earnings.

Viability of the project however, began decreasing rapidly soon after Independence. This was brought about mainly by the activities of the district administration. In contravention of its own notification of 1940, which required the deputy commissioner, Darjeeling, to regulate the timing and frequency of trips by trucks, for the last two decades the district administration has been liberally issuing truck permits. This has resulted in a fall in the freight that the toy train carried. In addition, with changing pace of vehicular traffic—gone are the days of horses and hand-pulled carts when the toy train was born—the speed of the train appeared to be very slow; the eight-hour journey to New Jalpaiguri, tedious. The railway administration is yet to fulfil its promise of dieselising the section, which would reduce the running time to four hours.

Today, the toy train, stripped of its uniqueness and glamour, and running short of finances, is only a decaying relic of the past. It has no ticket collector, the second class compartments are without lights and toilets and sometimes the passengers themselves are expected to fill up the engine reservoir by collecting water from public drains because the water tank has been removed from the station. Indeed, the recent decision of the railway administration to demolish a part of the beautifully designed station in Darjeeling, to build a multi-lakh rupee railway Holiday Home will no doubt serve the lethal blow to the already tottering toy train service.

Tapash Mukherjee

Civil Liberties



How political opponents are spied upon

By A. G. NOORANI

Apparently, police surveillance over political opponents is becoming more common and more blatant than ever before. Two recent incidents reveal only the tip of the iceberg. On 3 January, Mr Srinivas Tiwari, former health minister of Madhya Pradesh who resigned at the instance of the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mr Arjun Singh, told reporters that CID men from Madhya Pradesh were all over Delhi to keep a watch on his movements. He claimed that they even asked the driver of his private car about his movements. Mr Tiwari added that the CID men were trying to tap his telephone and also trying to find out what transpired in his meeting with Mrs Gandhi.

Less than a fortnight earlier, on 22 December, Mr A. G. Kulkarni told the Rajya Sabha about the visit and telephone call of an intelligence officer to his house in Sangli (Maharashtra) and said that his son had informed him that an intelligence officer had been making enquiries about his remaining term as Rajya Sabha member and as to when he would return to Sangli. The minister of state for home affairs, Mr Yogendra Makwana, said that he had enquired and found that the intelligence officer wanted to make a "courtesy call" on Mr Kulkarni It was a routine "intelligence duty" to establish rapport with politicians and others. Mr M. Hidayatullah, chairman, pointed out that "courtesy call" by the police had a different meaning in police parlance.

Yet, the government did not consider this visit by an official of the central intelligence to be improper. True, he did not shadow Mr Kulkarni, unlike the Madhya Pradesh CID, but a man has every right to protection against such unwelcome invasion of his privacy.

Lest we forget, the Shah Commission was able to expose in detail on the basis of documentary evidence comprising official records this routine business of snooping on politicians. In its First Interim Report submitted on 11 March 1978, the Commission recorded that the Intelligence Bureau of the government of India was being used to maintain surveillance on the activities of some of the important Congress leaders and ministers. The Commission came across a Top Secret note dated 18 June 1975, sent by the then director, Intelligence Bureau to the Prime Minister's secretariat. The Commission did not publish it but summarised its contents: "It contains matters which among other things could have been compiled only on the basis of a physical watch and telephone tappings of the persons concerned. This raises a very important issue which has relevance to the assault on the privacy of individuals and even of ministers of government for purposes which are other than those strictly necessary for ensuring the security of the state."

Mr Jagjivan Ram, the then minister in Mrs Gandhi's cabinet stated before the Commission that even before the imposition of the Emergency, his movements were watched and that his telephone was tapped. This he was able to assert on the basis of the information which was furnished to him by the concerned officials who owed loyalty to him. After the imposition of the Emergency, the watch on him was intensified. According to him, "It had not ceased even after the Emergency."

The experiences of Mr Tiwari and Mr Kulkarni show that the vice persists, still. What exactly is the legal position?

It is clearly a gross violation of the citizen's fundamental rights. Article 21 of the Constitution lays down that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law." Surveillance is undoubtedly a violation of "personal liberty" and it is done in political cases without any legal sanction.

If a law were passed to sanction surveillance for political ends, it would violate the fundamental rights to freedom of movement and of association and be void. But some states do have laws which authorise surveillance of habitual criminals.

In a very recent case, the Supreme Court upheld such surveillance subject to certain safeguards. The facts were simple. Malak Singh and Jaswant Singh were brothers and they claimed to be engaged in a business known as "Continental Electricals," besides owning a hotel named Park Restaurant on Grand Trunk Road, Amritsar. They were income tax assessees and asserted that they were law-abiding citizens. They claimed that on account of their active political affiliation to the Akali Dal, Prithipal Singh, a Congress MLA, inimically disposed towards them had been instrumental in having them falsely implicated in some criminal cases. All the criminal cases ended either in acquittal or discharge. The brothers were also detained under the MISA for some time but they were released from detention as the Advisory Board refused to confirm their detention. They claimed that they took active part in exposing the corrupt activities of the deputy superintendent of police, Amritsar and had even published wall posters with the result that the deputy superintendent of police had instituted a prosecution for defamation against them. As a measure of humiliation and harassment, the names of the brothers were entered in the surveillance register maintained at the police state 'A' division, Amritsar, and their photographs displayed amongst those of notorious criminals and bad characters at the police station. Whenever a senior police officer visits the police station the brothers are required to attend the police station along with other persons whose names are entered in the surveillance register. They are also needlessly asked to associate themselves with various investigations though they have nothing whatever to do with those investigations.

In his reply, the senior superintendent of police, Amritsar, alleged that the brothers were opium smugglers and habitual offenders and receivers of stolen property and, therefore, their names were entered in the surveillance register. He denied that their photographs had been displayed at the police station and said that reasons for entering their names in the surveillance register were to be found in the history sheets which were confidential documents and which, therefore, could not be disclosed.

The High Court dismissed the petition whereupon Malak Singh and Jaswant Singh appealed to the Supreme Court where, also, they lost. But the Supreme Court made important observations on the safeguards.

The surveillance had been imposed under the Punjab Police Rules, 1933 (Rule 23.4). It was limited to "persons who are reasonably believed to be habitual offenders" and the like. Surveillance was to be exercised by close watch on movements and without any illegal interference.

The Court said, "Organised crime cannot be successfully fought without close watch of suspects. But, surveillance may be intrusive and it may so seriously encroach on the privacy of a citizen as to infringe his fundamental right to personal liberty guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution and the freedom of movement guaranteed by Article 19(1) (d). That cannot be permitted. So long as surveillance is for the purpose of preventing crime and is confined to the limits prescribed we do not think a person whose name is included in the surveillance register can have a genuine cause for complaint." The grounds of belief need not be furnished to the persons whose names are entered in the suurveillance register. But it may become necessary in some cases to satisfy the Court when an entry is challenged that there are grounds to entertain such reasonable belief. The Court recorded that "In the present case we sent for the relevant records and we have satisfied ourselves that there were sufficient grounds for the superintendent of police to entertain a reasonable belief."

The Court faced the problem of abuse of power squarely. "But all this does not mean that police have a license to enter the names of whoever they like in the surveillance register; nor can the surveillance be such as to squeeze the fundamental freedoms guaranteed to call citizens or to obstruct the free exercise and enjoyment of those freedoms; nor can the surveillance so intrude as to offend the dignity of the individual. Surveillance of persons who do not fall within the categories mentioned in Rule 23.4 or for reasons unconnected with the prevention of crime, or excessive surveillance falling beyond the limits prescribed by the rules, will entitle a citizen to the Court's protection which the Court will not hesitate to give."

The Court followed old precedents and did not consider the legality of the Police Rules themselves. In 1962, in a case from UP, the Supreme Court by a majority of 3-2, had given a very narrow interpretation of freedom of movement and the right to privacy. It ruled that a watch on the movements or the home of one suspected of crime was not a violation of the fundamental right to freedom of movement within the country. Besides, the right to privacy is not a guaranteed right under the Constitution "and, therefore, the attempt to ascertain the movements of an individual which is merely a manner in which privacy is invaded is not an infringement of a fundamental right." Two distinguished Justices dissented, Mr Subba Rao and Mr J. C. Shah. They remarked, "How could a movement under the scrutinising gaze of the policemen be described as a free movement? The whole country is his jail. The freedom of movement in Clause (d), of Art. 19, therefore, must be a movement in a free country; that is, in a country where he can do whatever he likes; speak to whomsoever he wants, meet people of his own choice control."On one point all the five judges were in full agreement. The nocturnal "domicilliary visit" by the police to the homes of suspects—the hated midnight knock—is a violation of personal liberty and is unconstitutional.

But in 1975 the Supreme Court held *both* surveillance and domicilliary visits under Madhya Pradesh regulations to be permissible though only in the case of "habitual criminals;" that is, persons against whom reasonable material exists to induce the opinion that they show "a determination, to lead a life of crime." Even so the Court remarked, "In truth, legality apart, these regulations ill-accord with the essence of personal freedoms and the State will do well to revise these old police regulations verging perilously near unconstitutionality." Obviously, the entire law of surveillance calls for review. ■

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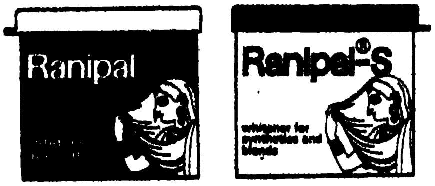

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THE WORLD

Aiding the rich

This year will be a bad one for Bangladesh—aid-wise. The country which has received nearly 11 billion dollars in foreign aid since its independence in 1971, will have very little this year. And the tragedy is that much of the aid has not trickled down to the millions of landless poor farmers because of corruption. It is said that the going price demanded by officers sanctioning construction projects is around 10,000 takas. A major portion of the aid money has merely helped the rich to get richer. In fact, a 1979 study by the Swedish International Development Authority, mentioned that the rural cooperatives established to benefit the poor, today work almost exclusively for the benefit of a small minority of rich farmers. Is President Zia going to do anything about corruption? He recently admitted that there was corruption in his country but "there are many countries where it is far worse." He will try to minimise it, he assured. Meanwhile the Reagan administration has lowered the amount of 125 million dollars aid promised by the Carter administration to 95 million dollars.

Mole at the top

Is the ex-MI5 chief, Sir Roger Hollis, a KGB agent? A new book by journalist Chapman Pincher, *Their trade if treachery*, claims that Sir Roger, head of the MI5 from 1956 to 1965, might have been a KGB agent. According to the author, five years after Sir Roger retired, he was called back to face "official and unprecedented interrogation" covering the whole 30 years during which he was near or at the top of Britain's security services. But Whitehall sources take the view that most of the alleged evidence that the author has gathered against Sir Roger is circumstantial. For instance, one of the allegations against Sir Roger was that when Antony Blunt was being interrogated about his possible treachery, Sir Roger withdrew two interrogators who had gone to visit Blunt. There was an unexplained delay of two days before they were authorised to return, which according to Pincher, gave Blunt enough time for a perfect cover story. Hollis and Blunt were close colleagues in MI5 during the war and it was Sir Roger who offered Blunt immunity in return for his confession.

Briefly

One quits

While Bangladesh's president Ziaur Rahaman was on a two-day visit to Nepal, one of his ministers resigned from the cabinet, thanks to the voice of his "conscience." According to the Bengali daily *Sangbad*, Dr Iqbal Mahbood, the minister for agriculture and forestry, quit the 46-member council of ministers because his "conscience compelled" him.

Sweden tops

The country which had the highest financial stakes in India in 1980 was a Scandinavian nation. Sweden topped the list of foreign investors in India in 1980 (with an investment of Rs 231 lakhs, out of a total foreign investment of Rs 963.14 lakhs), followed by Japan (Rs 191.60 lakhs), the USA (Rs 162.73 lakhs), Italy (Rs 98 lakhs), the UK (Rs 88.46 lakhs).

Operation under guard

Benazir Bhutto, daughter of the executed former Pakistan premier Z. A. Bhutto, had to be taken from jail to hospital to be operated on for internal bleeding. She was taken to the hospital, which scores of policemen had cordoned off, operated on and taken back to Karachi central jail where her mother is too

Welcome home

Dame Jana Sihotang (41), is a polygamist who lives happily with his 15 wives in a big house in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Sihotang's method of living is simple: he marries whoever he likes—without opposition. Except on the 15th occasion. The parents of his 15th wife, sued him for marrying their minor daughter. He was jailed—only to be released later

Africa's hungry children

Huddling for the only warmth and comfort they can find—besides a free meal of maize porridge or high-energy biscuits and milk, if available at the Kaabong emergency feeding centre—these are some of famine-stricken Uganda's unfortunate human beings.

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LAWRENCE & MAYO
OPTICIANS
TO THE NATION

GOOD NEWS

Baba Amte given Rs 1 lakh

Lady Jackson, better known as Barbara Ward, the economist who made international cooperation and the problems of developing countries her special concern, has decided to donate the Rs one lakh she received as the winner of the Jawaharlal Nehru award for international understanding for 1980. The proceeds will now got to Baba Amte of Anandwan, in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, who, through the Maharogi Sewa Samiti, has done a life-time's work among lepers and the physically handicapped. Baba Amte will use this money specifically for the upliftment of the Chandrapur tribals.

NFDC brings two valuable films

The much-maligned recently constituted National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) has done something commendable: imported two extremely valuable and worthwhile documentaries. One is *King: A filmed record*, a three-hour biography of the famous black US leader Dr Martin Luther King, put together from a mass of TV footage by Ely Landau. It records the history of the US civil rights movement from 1955 to 1968 when Dr King was assassinated in Memphis. The film contains such highlights of the black leader's career as the campaign to desegregate buses in Alabama and the historic march to Washington's Lincoln Memorial in 1966.

The other documentary imported is *A look at Liv* on the famous Swedish actress Liv Ullman. The 67-minute film, by Richard Kaplan contains interviews with both Liv and her former husband director Ingmar Bergman, who has made some superb films with her. Included are also excerpts from some of Liv's more important recent films like *Scenes from a marriage* and *The abdication*. The NFDC has bought both the theatre and TV exhibition rights of the documentaries.

Martin Luther King

Music for prisoners

The Raipur central jail has installed at a cost of Rs 11,000, a public address system so that its 1,600 inmates can listen to radio programmes, music and speeches while in their wards or cells. Inaugurating this facility, the first of its kind in India, commissioner Raghunath Prasad of Raipur division had his own story to tell of how a criminal, compassionately treated, can reform himself and become an asset to society. Years ago, an eight-year-old boy working for a relative of his was found stealing. When Mr Prasad found out that the boy belonged to a local caste with a reputation for crime, he took the boy in his charge, treated him with kindness and sent him to school. That boy today has earned a post-graduate degree, become a government servant and is earnestly working for the uplift of his caste.

20-year-old saves dam

The Sirko reservoir was built early last year in Raipur district's Basna area to irrigate 5,000 acres of land. But in July when the rains came it sprung a leak. Jaglal, a 20-year-old tribal youth, who was passing by, spotted the leak and immediately jumped in with a 12-ft bamboo pole. He tried to plug the leak but failed. His cries, however, raised the alarm among the local people who eventually called the police. The MP government has awarded Jaglal Rs 1,000; but for his timely detection of the breach the ensuing flood would have caused severe loss and damage to local life and property.

TV networks upstaged

The Himalayan car rally held in October last year can be viewed on Doordarshan without the country having to spend a tidy sum in foreign exchange to buy the film from one of the foreign TV networks that covered it. When Doordarshan decided that it just did not have the money for a full-length coverage, 24-year-old Benoy Behl, a second year student of the Pune Film Institute got busy. First he managed to get a place on one of the jeeps sponsored by Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd and then acquired the Super 8 mm camera from D. P. Lunkad who runs the country's sole 8 mm film laboratory in Bombay. The greatest bonus for Behl was the sheer good fortune to be the only cameraman present at the secret finish point of the rally at Narkhanda in Himachal Pradesh. The foreign crew despite the help of helicopters, missed the ending.

Benoy Behl

Socialworker honoured

The Ladies Study Group of Calcutta's annual awards honoured Dr Sharda Fatehpuria for her work among mentally retarded children. Originally a student of philosophy and psychology, Dr Fatehpuria first became interested in the problems of mentally retarded children through her studies. Later, intellectual pursuit and work combined in a single mission. In 1974 she helped set up the Manav Vikas Kendra to give handicapped children institutional care. What began with five children, now has a hundred, along with 20 teachers and six specialists. Mental retardation is not an illness but a state of the mind, says Dr Fatehpuria. At least five children from her *kendra* join regular schools every year.

KHAAS BAAT

Now that *Vinod Mehra* has finally succeeded in getting a divorce—the big alimony-divorce issue found its way to the press in its minutest details—wife *Bindiya* is strutting around as though she owns the world. (Given her limited thinking capacity, it may be true—Vinod is her world!) And so to celebrate the occasion, she has started wearing the chunky diamond-platinum set every day, as well as a massive ring on her left ring-finger. And, if that is not loud enough, then there is her voice that cracks out at the half-a-dozen attendants at her beauty parlour. Politeness, of course, has never been one of her virtues, which makes people wonder if Vinod prefers the rude and loud type to the quiet and sophisticated ones.

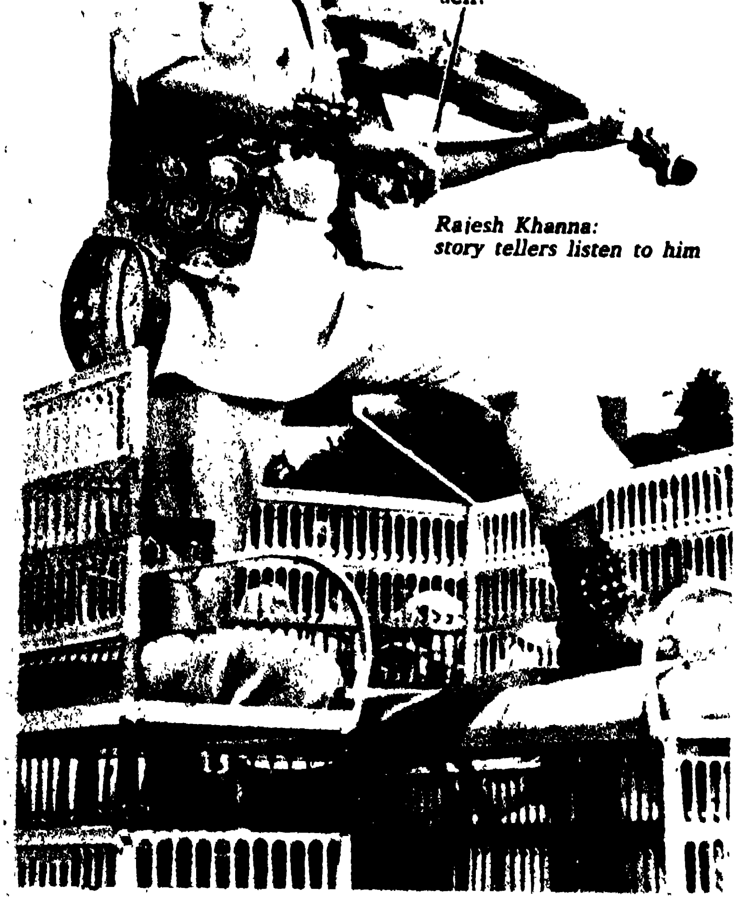
DURGAPRASAD

Rekha: still at her pranks

RAJU UPADHYAY

Tina : getting ready to be a housewife

One lonely holiday evening, in sharp contrast to the usual homely image that the hero has been projecting for quite a while now, *Rajesh Khanna* was seen deeply involved in a discussion with the young script writer *Mirza*. Judging from the looks that passed and the highly animated talk that Rajesh was involved in, it seemed that Rajesh was doing more of the story-telling than the writer himself.


DURGAPRASAD

Rajesh Khanna: story tellers listen to him

Did you hear the latest prank that someone played on one of her oldest friends? Of course, it was meant to be an April Fool joke; nevertheless, it was a wicked thing to do. A mysterious phonecall informed everyone connected with *Zarina*, that she had finally decided to get engaged with her beau *Ramesh Narang* on a specific time and day. One can imagine Zarina's amazement when phonecalls—some nasty and others pleasant—started coming in. The prime suspect, of course, was ex-bosom friend, *Rekha*. Rekha is yet to get over her fondness of imitating people, ghost-voicing over the phone and playing pranks.

Why is there a sudden drop in *Tina Munim's* activities? Simple. Tina has no work on her hands. Nowadays, she is either busy training herself for a domestic existence or is seen hanging on the arms of *Sunjay Dutt*. But Sunjay seems in no mood to pamper Tina. His mother is in hospital in Bombay, and that has got him worried once again. Alas, for Tina, with so much time on her hands, she has no option but to sit with her newlyborn nephew and nurse him. But if Tina is really looking for work, why isn't she coming back to the industry? The grapevine has it that Tina is not only hurt with the behaviour of people in the industry, but is also fed up with her career.

By the look of things, people of the industry have developed the art and expertise in scaring off new people who want to join them. It began when *Aruna Irani* brought her brother to a function. Many eyebrows were raised at the handsome brother and finally the catty comments started flowing in: he was tagged off as Aruna's latest beau. That did it! Brother Irani dropped all ideas of ever joining the industry. And then there was *Kiran Virale*, the pet of off-beat film makers like *Hrishikesh Mukerji* and *Gulzar*. When *Chandu Virale* was brought to a party the females just would not stop staring at him. Chandu was amused, or so the look on his face said, but he is a shy person and would no doubt steer clear of the trade.

Aruna Irani

AMITA DESHMUKH

KHAAS BAAT

Pratap Pothen seems to be in great demand. After *Rathi Devi*, it is *Radhika* now, who is desperately trying to grab a few roles opposite Pratap. Radhika has very good reasons too: a string of almost a dozen flops to her name; and if that is not enough, then there is her boyfriend, *Sudhakar*, whose films too have not been successful. However, while Sudhakar is yet to find a way out for his problems, Radhika seems to have hit upon a solution. "She is lively, she is bright," is how she was received by none other than Pratap Pothen himself. What more can Radhika ask for, except that her films be received as well by the audience.

Reeta in Kanyakumari

Teenage heroine *Menaka* is yet to attain stardom. But this does not mean she has succeeded in steering clear of controversies! First, her name was linked with director *K. S. Sethumadhavan*. Then, came her first film *Ramayee Vayassukku Vandatha (Ramayee has come of age)* and the film's title came in for a great deal of ridicule. Her second film *Savithri* created a furore among the brahmins of Tamil Nadu, who took out a procession denouncing the film. Finally, it was *Oppol*. *Oppol* was not exactly controversial but was given a great deal of publicity after it won the national award. But for all the publicity and controversy, Menaka has not lost her head. Whether she has ambition or not is of course a different question, but at the moment she definitely has an ideal. "Even before I ever thought of entering the film industry, *Jaya Bhaduri* was my ideal and she continues to be so," says the young actress.

Menaka and Balan in Oppol

Menaka in Savithri

Kamalahasan in Raja Parvai

Balan K. Nair, so long the villain of the Malayalam screen, sprung a real surprise on the film industry of the south when he bagged the best actor award for his performance in *Oppol*. From now on, one shouldn't really be surprised if he gets offers to be the hero in his films. And for all you know the change in his career and fortune may come about rapidly too. Incidentally, for those who might have forgotten, Balan was involved in the same fatal helicopter accident that killed the matinee idol *Jeyan*.

"How I wish the young girls have the guts to walk out of an unhappy marriage, unhappy home and unhappy affair and lead a life on their steam!" says the veteran star *Sowcar Janaki*. The actress herself has recovered from an unhappy marriage and speaks, not without a note of pride in her voice, about the liberated life she is living. Naturally, she was rather annoyed when this teenage heroine walked up to her one day and said "Auntie, I want to get married."

Director *K. S. Sethumadhavan's* film *Oppol* has been adjudged the second best film of the year. The film has also won several awards from Kerala. It is after a long time that the director has come in the news for reasons that are not personal—his name had been linked with the teenage heroine *Menaka*, and the affair had been one of the most discussed themes of gossip columnists. The director, however, has always been unperturbed. All he would say was, "Me having an infatuation for Menaka! Well, let me tell you, cinema is my wife and mistress..." Frankly, there is hardly any reason to doubt him, especially after *Oppol*.

PIOUSJI

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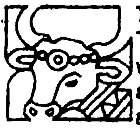
Beginning 10 May
This week the Sun is in Aries and Taurus, Mercury and Venus are in Taurus, Jupiter and Saturn are in Virgo and Rahu is in Cancer. The Moon will be moving through Leo, Virgo and Libra from Cancer.

ARIES (15 April—14 May) Several excellent opportunities to expand your business and social activities will come your way this week. Your qualities will be appreciated by people around you. Let your intuition be your guide. Letters will bring good tidings. You are advised to look after the health of your family members. The time is particularly favourable for romance. **Good dates:** 10, 11 and 12. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.



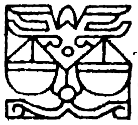
TAURUS (15 May—14 June). This will be a very hectic week for you. Unfortunately a lot of disappointments are in store for you. But do not let this worry you. You are advised to guard against deception Look after your health. Letters will not bring good tidings. Do not spend your valuable time in bad company. Do not be erratic and do not lose your temper **Good dates:** 11, 13 and 15. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-east.

GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Guard yourself against deception. Keep your temper under control and avoid quarrels. The time is not suitable for making any changes Exercise patience and forbearance Some good fortune is, however, indicated Friends will prove to be helpful. Some of you may get transfer orders **Good dates:** 10, 13 and 16 **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 8 **Favourable directions:** North and west

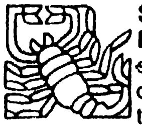
CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week should prove to be fairly successful for you Friends and relatives with good connections will extend help and cooperation The time is particularly favourable for those connected with artistic and intellectual activities. Romance is indicated. **Good dates:** 10, 12 and 14 **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable directions:** North and north-west.

LEO (15 August—14 September) You will be praised by your friends and relatives. This week promises to be particularly good for love and matrimonial affairs. Do not make hasty decisions. The time is not suitable to make any changes on your professional front. Look after your health. Your domestic front will create problems for you. **Good dates:** 11, 13 and 14. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 3 and 7. **Favourable directions:** North-east and south.

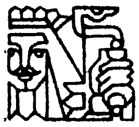
VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Businessmen will make steady progress this week A woman whom you love may interfere in your work. You are advised not to mingle business with pleasure. New friends will contribute to your happiness You may require faith, patience and self-confidence to overcome your problems. **Good dates:** 13, 14 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 6 and 8. **Favourable directions:** East and west.



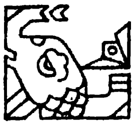
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Your business affairs will make progress but you may have to face oppositions In spite of disappointments, you will be happy and cheerful. Your intellectual pursuits will be crowned with success Exercise utmost caution while dealing with members of the opposite sex **Good dates:** 10, 15 and 16 **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 5. **Favourable direction:** South.



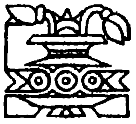
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This week should prove to be a particularly happy one. But the time is not favourable to make change of residence This is the time to launch any new venture. You are advised to check extravagance Problems on your domestic front are predicted. **Good dates:** 11, 12 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North-west



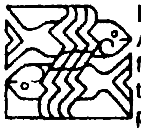
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This week has good fortunes in store for you. Inheritance and new friends are predicted. This is an opportune moment to ask for favours from your employers and relatives. The time is particularly favourable for courtship and marriage. You will gain financially through elders. You will enjoy a good health. **Good dates:** 13, 14 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 8. **Favourable directions:** West and south.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This week your financial position will improve greatly. You are advised not to mingle business with pleasure Do not permit a member of the opposite sex to interfere in your professional matters. Exercise tact while dealing with your subordinates Keep your employers and seniors in good humour. **Good dates:** 14, 15 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9 **Favourable directions:** North and east.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This week has mixed fortunes in store for you. You will gain through various means. The time is favourable for winning even lottery prizes Be careful while dealing with property matters. You are advised to treat elders with respect Take initiative and forge ahead with your affairs. **Good dates:** 10, 11 and 15. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South



PISCES (15 March—14 April) A mixed fortune is in store for you Relax and take things easy. Elders will prove to be very helpful. You will gain through property matters. Exercise circumspection and you will be rewarded with promotion and success. You may have to postpone your journey **Good dates:** 10, 12 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 5 and 7. **Favourable directions:** North and west.

Political forecast for Mr Chandra Shekhar, Janata Party president: Mr Chandra Shekhar has a bright political future in the next 17 years. He might even become a central minister in the period between January 1982 and December 1985. But there are little chances of his assuming the office of the Prime Minister. He might be imprisoned for his political activities in the period between 1983 and 1985.

AMRITLAL

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chess

Alice in FIDEland

I once saw in a newspaper a photograph of a signpost shaped like a double-headed arrow, the two heads pointing in opposite directions. A notice underneath read: 'This way'. Whenever I see a new set of regulations issued by FIDE (the World Chess Federation) I am reminded of this quaint ambiguity, for surely no other legislative body has such a talent for producing laws designed to support both sides of an argument.

This month in Malta the general assembly of FIDE are discussing proposals for new regulations to cover the world championship cycle. Certainly the present ones need to be rethought. For example, the rules covering the playing schedules for the Candidates Matches are hopelessly inadequate and have led to a lot of unnecessary squabbling between players who did not know on which day which game was due to be played. There is also a ludicrously ambiguous tie-break system. Under the present rules if a match is tied and the number of wins with White and Black are equal, then the winner is the player to have equalised the score last. A pretty stupid criterion, particularly when one realises that under the cockeyed playing schedule it is quite possible say for game 8 to finish after game 9. So if Tweedledum wins game 9 and the next day Tweedledee wins game 8, who equalised last? This is how the challenger for the world championship is decided.

So how will FIDE patch up the holes? There is a proposal to do away entirely with the system of elimination matches to decide the challenger and to go back to the old system of a candidates' tournament. This may sound like a sensible idea, replacing a complicated series of matches with a plain simple tournament, but it would be facile to believe that this would at a stroke remove all the problems. When Bobby Fischer first played in a candidates' tournament he complained bitterly about the Soviet players, who formed quite a hefty chunk of the tournament, 'ganging up' against him by manipulating the results of their individual games to keep him out of contention. A serious accusation, maybe a rash one, but it prompted FIDE to change to the present system of matches, and is there any reason to believe that Fischer's objections would be less valid today than they were 20 years ago? Evidently not, especially in view of the very strong political current which has ebbed into chess in the last few years. By switching back to a candidates tournament FIDE would be risking a major East-West confrontation with players from both sides accusing each other of throwing games for political or other reasons.

The only conceivable reason for returning to a candidates' tournament is that it is easier to administer, but if FIDE is to continue to exist as a credible organisation it should be seen to be promoting the interest of chess, not merely trying to reduce its own work load. If international chess is to flourish, FIDE must tighten up its present regulations and put its house in order. Abdication is no solution. Until such time as FIDE resolves to impose some logic on its own administration its lead will be about as useful as the two-way signpost.

Unpleasant Surprise

White: Prodanov. Black: Kirov
Sicilian Defence

1. P—K4, P—QB4; 2. N—KB3, P—K3; 3. P—Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, N—KB3; 5. N—QB3, P—Q3; 6. B—K2, B—K2; 7. O—O, O—O; 8. P—B4, N—B3; 9. B—K3, P—QR3; 10. Q—K1, N x N; 11. B x N, P—QN4; 12. R—Q1, B—N2; 13. B—B3, Q—B2; 14. P—K5, P x P; 15. P x P, N—Q2; 16. B x B, Q x B; 17. N—K4, Q—B2; 18. N—B6+, P x N; 19. Q—N3+, K—R1; 20. P x P, Q x Q; 21. P x B+ Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

'Do good players really foresee the clever end-plays we read about in the Press?' asked a Doubting Thomasina from Cornwall.

I sympathise with the point of view because, as a moderate chess player, I wonder sometimes about the inner truth of those annotations by the masters which begin, 'Not so and so, because of such and such', extending over 14 lines of analysis.

At bridge it is a matter of degree. Once a player has a grasp of end-game technique, it is not difficult for him to foresee a standard situation that will arise six or seven tricks later. This applies especially to elimination play, where it is often not necessary to form a picture of the opposing hands. Take a deal of this sort:

Dealer, South. Love all

	♠ A 7 5 ♥ 9 6 5 2 ♦ 10 6 3 ♣ Q 10 5	
♠ 6 3 ♥ Q 10 ♦ A K 9 5 2 ♣ 9 6 4 3	N W E S	♠ 9 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ Q J 8 7 4 ♣ A J 7
	♠ K Q J 10 8 4 2 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ — ♣ K 8 2	

Playing in Four Spades, South ruffs the diamond lead and observes that a 3-3 break in hearts or, failing that, a finesse of ♣ 10, will see him home. However, it is good play to lead ♠ 10 to dummy at trick two and ruff another diamond. As ♠ 9 has providentially fallen, South can cross to ♠ 7 to eliminate the third diamond. After Ace and another heart the position is.

	♠ 5 ♥ 9 6 ♦ — ♣ Q 10 5	
♠ — ♥ — ♦ A 9 ♣ 9 6 4 3	N W E S	♠ — ♥ K J ♦ Q ♣ A J 7
	♠ K 4 ♥ 3 ♦ — ♣ K 8 2	

Now West is forced to open up the clubs, and by playing low from dummy South makes the contract so long as West has either the 9 of clubs or the Jack. It is not necessary to foresee the ending – just to play with good technique.

TERENCE REESE

stamps

It is just four years since the familiar National Savings stamps were withdrawn from sale because they were proving too expensive to issue, considering their minor contribution to the savings movement. Their withdrawal was the signal for philatelists to start seeking examples of the early issues, which date from the First World War. These are elusive and the search was handicapped by lack of information until the publication of the only book on the subject. *United Kingdom Savings Stamps, Labels and Coupons*, by Lionel D. Jones (Cinderella Stamp Club, 136 pp., £4·95). This is a comprehensive guide based on official records. Between 1953 and 1967 Princess Anne and Prince Charles were portrayed at various ages on the savings stamps. Prince Charles was 11 when this halfcrown stamp was issued in 1960.

The Canadian Post Office has been issuing, at yearly intervals, series of stamps illustrating the life and culture of the Eskimos, more correctly and courteously known as Inuits, since 'Eskimo' is a derogatory Red Indian term meaning 'eater of raw meat'. Previous series have featured Inuit homes, hunting and community life. The latest issue is devoted to religious beliefs, which are generally pantheistic. The 17-cents stamp (above) reproduces a print by an Inuit artist, Kenojouak, showing the wild animals and birds greeting the return of the spring sun. New Canadian stamps, both mint and on first day covers, can be obtained from the Philatelic Service, Canada Post, Ottawa, Canada K1A OB5.

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. He was born a hundred years ago in Hungary and was an influential composer of 20th century classical music. His most important works include *The Music for Strings* and *Percussion with Celesta*. Who was this composer?
2. What is the Age of Aquarius?
3. If you are a vitalist, what would you be believing in?
4. What does exobiology deal with?

?

ANSWERS

1. Bela Bartok (1981-1945).
2. An age of peace and harmony that will replace the age of strife—the Age of Pisces. Astrologers have reached a common consensus that the world entered the Age of Aquarius from the Age of Pisces in 1960 and this age will continue till the 24th century.
3. The philosophical doctrine that the behaviour of the living organism, at least at times, is due to a vital principle that cannot be explained wholly in terms of physics and chemistry. This doctrine was strongly believed by C. E. M. Joad and is implicit in Henri Bergson's (1859-1941) theory of creative evolution.
4. Also known as xenobiology, it deals with the study of life beyond the earth's atmosphere. An important branch of this discipline deals with the effects on man of nonterrestrial environments.

this india

prize rs. 30 for the entry given first

NEW DELHI: A suggestion that legislators vigorously adopt family planning touched off witty exchanges between the members and the speaker enlivening the question hour in the Lok Sabha. The speaker, Mr Balram Jakhar, and the health minister, Mr B. Shankaranand confessed that family planning was no longer relevant in their cases. The speaker said his last child was 25 years old, while Mr Shankaranand informed the House that his was 15 years old. They made the confession when Mr Satish Agarwal (BJP) proposed that all political parties decide not to give ticket to any candidate who had more than three children. However, he hastened to add this would not apply to the speaker even though he had five children. It should apply only to Mr Shankaranand, who had eight children, and other members. Mr Shankaranand brought the house down by asking what marriage had to do with producing children. Addressing himself seriously to the question, the minister asked Mr Agarwal whether he had discussed his proposal in his own party first. Mr Ramavtar Shastri suggested some special scheme to encourage legislators to adopt family planning. The minister agreed that MPs should themselves set an example. "I wish they do it," he said—*Times of India* (Anand R. Deshpande, Solapur)

LUCKNOW: An Indian, domiciled in the United States, has come back home, but with a difference—he had gone abroad a male but has returned a female! The professor who arrived from the U.S. had fathered four children before he underwent a complete change of sex about three years ago. His wife subsequently divorced him and now the professor, back to the native place, has invariably become a centre of amazement and an object of amused curiosity of the residents of the area. A real problem of adjustment lies ahead for the professor who came home in strange circumstances, no doubt—*Pioneer* (Rajan Samuel, Kanpur)

KHAMMAM: The case of a dead person having been posted as invigilator has come to light. Viswanadham, who died a year ago, and whose family is receiving pension from Khammam *Zilla Parishad* is posted as an invigilator by the district educational authorities—*Indian Express* (Bhaskar Padmakar, Srikakulam)

NEW DELHI: About the Chinese language it is said that a slight variation in tone can change the meaning of a word entirely. Something of the sort happens also in transliteration from Hindi to English. In its annual report to Parliament, for instance, the union labour ministry has described its habitat as *sharam* (shame) Bhavan rather than *shram* (labour) Bhavan—*Times of India* (Aloke Gupta, Calcutta)

NAGPUR: Today's 'April Fool's Day' was celebrated by some citizen at the cost of the 'public servants.' The objects of the joke were the police control room, Ajni police and the fire brigade. The story began at about 2-30 pm when the police control room received a phone call that a truck mishap had taken place at the Viswakarma Nagar Milk Scheme booth. The informer added that the public were in a dangerous mood and are about to set the truck on fire. The information was conveyed to the Ajni police. All the concerned authorities rushed to the spot with the fire brigade only to realise that they were fooled. That a burst of laughter followed the incident at some unknown quarters goes without saying—*Nagpur Times* (C. V. Rao, Nagpur)

NEW DELHI: The Daryaganj police were sent on a merry dance on Saturday (4 April) night. At around midnight the alarm in a nationalised bank opposite the police station went off. The police immediately cordoned off the area surrounding the bank. The bank security guard and the manager were alerted. Almost for an hour the armed police waited but in vain. He was even ordered to surrender himself. When no one showed up the police broke open the locks and very cautiously entered the bank. What they saw inside was hilarious for the spectators, but it failed to amuse the police. For, they were made to look fools by none other than some cats, who were playing with the alarm system—*Hindustan Times* (L. Sita, New Delhi)

NEW DELHI: More than 2,900 primary schools in the country have no teachers, according to the fourth all-India educational survey. Of these 600 are in Uttar Pradesh alone. The survey conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training does not give figures of students enrolled in these schools. Bihar has 497 schools with no teachers. Madhya Pradesh comes next with 411, followed by Karnataka 381, Andhra Pradesh 292, Orissa 243, Maharashtra 115, Tamil Nadu 104, Rajasthan 96 and Gujarat 68. Figures for the remaining states and union territories are relatively marginal, the national figure being 2,937—*Indian Express* (V. S. Natarajan, Tirunelveli)

without comment

(India is not a) Trojan horse for Soviet imperialism—Mrs Gandhi

The Nehru family was a treasure this country got from the Almighty—A. R. Antulay, Maharashtra CM, quoted in *Current*

Whatever influence or weight anybody has in the Congress Party is totally related to the confidence and trust of the Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi—Arjun Singh, Madhya Pradesh CM in *Weekend Review*

Jyoti Basu's father is Nishikanta Basu. Nishi means the dark night. Hence, the load-shedding—Ajit Panja, WBPCC(I) president quoted in *India Today*

Mrs Gandhi is afraid of democratic processes in India's political life, especially in the life of West Bengal, a democratically advanced state. She wants to delay democratic processes, such as elections and by-elections, if she cannot stop it altogether—Pramode Das Gupta, Left Front chairman

Mr Bahuguna seems to be worried about the country. I have my sympathies with him—Chandra Shekhar, Janata Party president

Those who can, must educate their children through the English medium—Mrs Gandhi

What is wrong if they (the RSS) talk of Hindu culture so long as they don't thrust it on anybody else—Ram Jethmalani, BJP vice-president

It is disgusting and disturbing that lawyers are dissipating their energy in fighting themselves—Y. V. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India

Defection does not seem to be a dirty word any more. Why should we unite?—Dev Kant Barooah on the unity of Congress parties in *Current*.

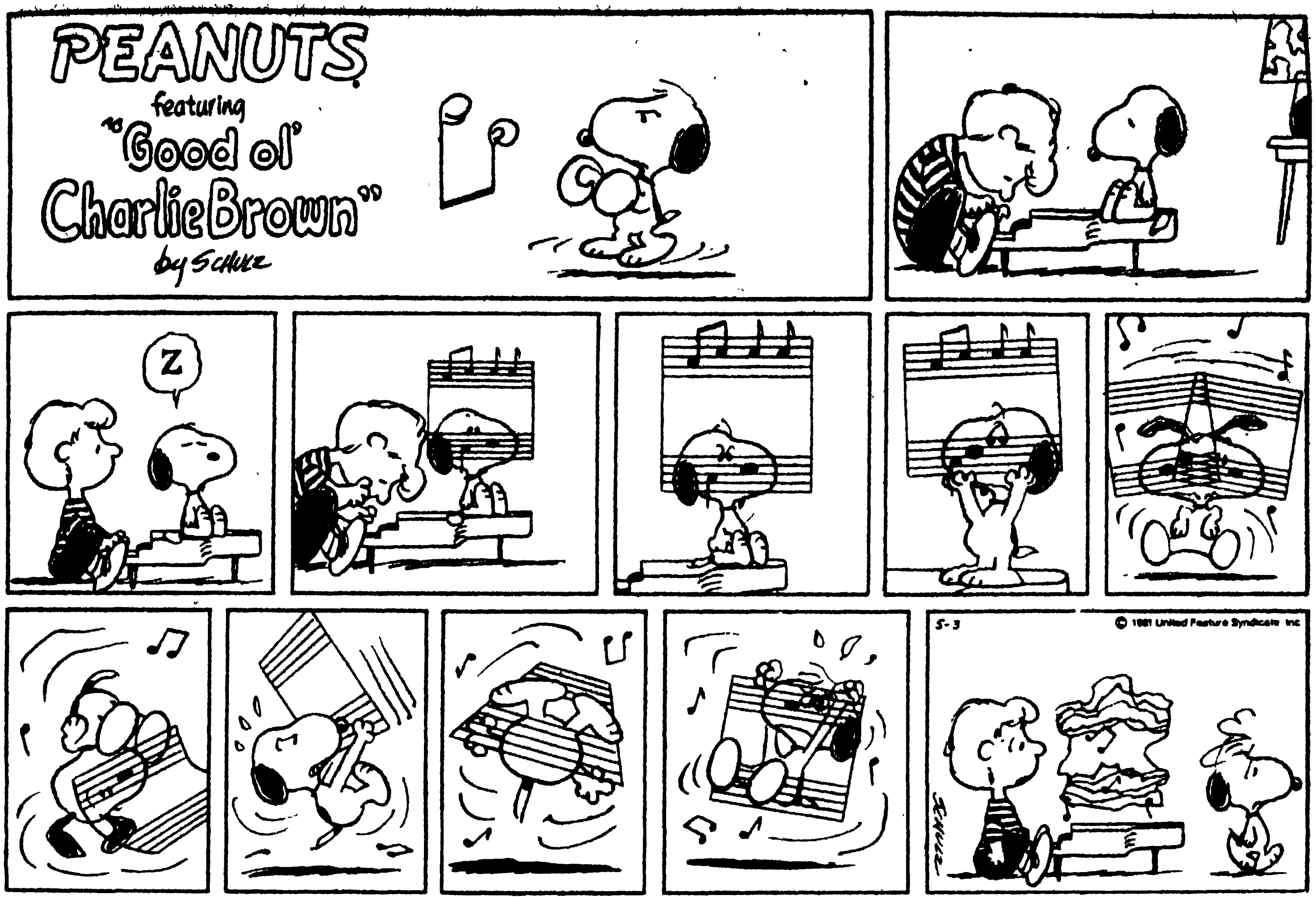
A person becomes a wrestler only by perspiring. He cannot become one by eating sweets and lying on a bed—Morarji Desai

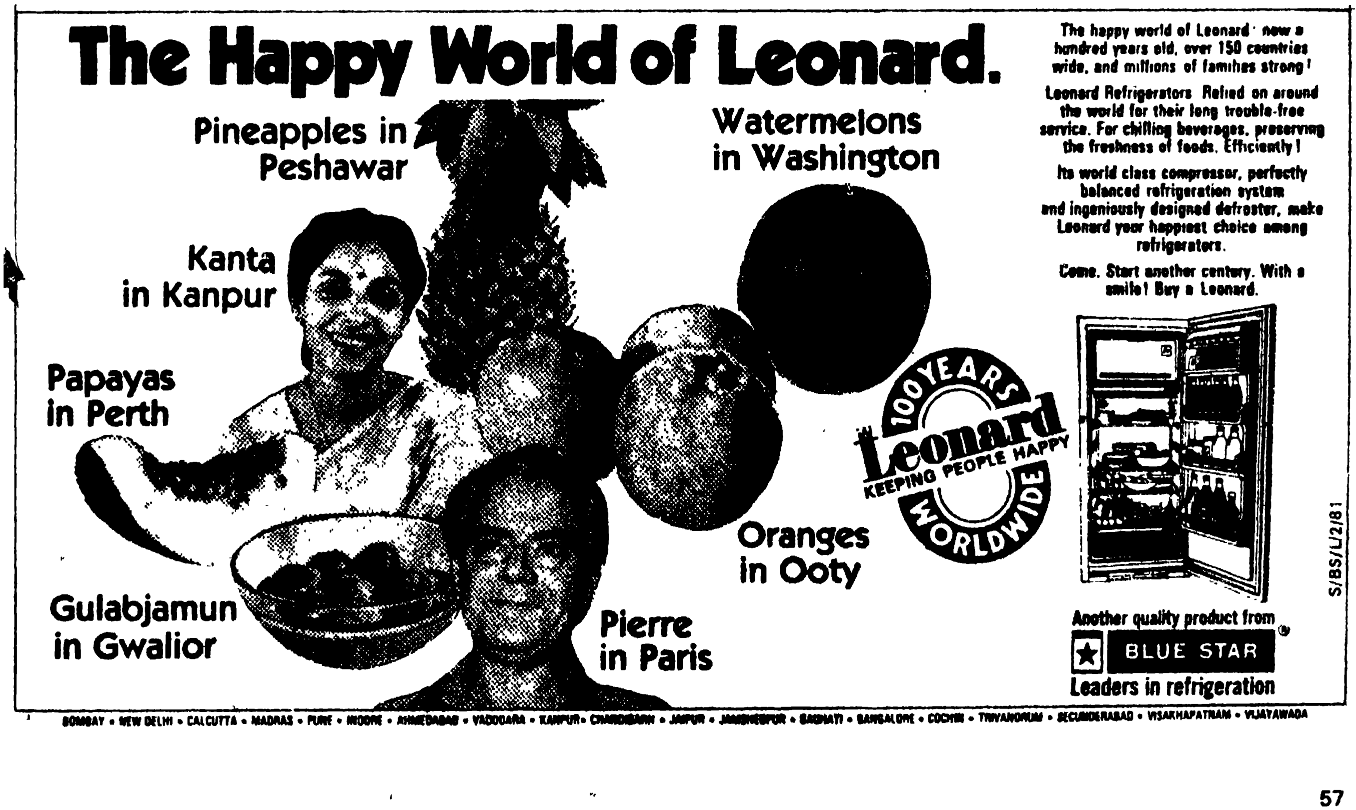
I think it wrong for a businessman to run newspapers, wrong for him to play a political role—J. R. D. Tata quoted in *Organiser*

So long as he (A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury) does not criticise the Prime Minister he is safe—Madhu Dandavate, Janata Party member in Lok Sabha

Your (Mrs Gandhi's) success may have made the British people believe that they might venture to have a woman as Prime Minister—Mrs Margaret Thatcher, British PM

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik





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ANTULAY, V. P. SINGH LIKELY TO BE PROMOTED

JAYANT DAS

A. R. Antulay

V. P. Singh

AT least two chief ministerial changes seem to be in the offing. Abdul Rahman Antulay of Maharashtra and Vishwanath Pratap Singh of Uttar Pradesh are slated for induction in the central cabinet in important positions. The union minister for planning and labour, Narain Dutt Tiwari, is the most likely successor to V. P. Singh in UP. (That will make labour a favourite central portfolio for would-be chief ministers. Since Mrs Gandhi's return to power in January 1980, Janaki Ballabh Patnaik and T. Anjiah have gone to the chief ministers' offices in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, respectively, via the Shram Shakti Bhavan.) Finding a successor to Antulay is, however, posing a problem. Vasantdada Patil, the strong Maratha leader from Sangli, who has been biding time as a general secretary of the AICC(I), is certainly a candidate despite threats of taking up *sanyas*. And so is his wife, Shalinitai (that is, if Dada's claim is turned down).

Another powerful Maratha leader, Y. J. Mohite, has thrown his hat into the ring. And so has information and broadcasting minister, Vasant Sathe, who is a brahmin from Vidharba..But there is a dark horse who may be Mrs Gandhi's choice—Shivraj V. Patil, minister of state for defence. Mrs Gandhi brought in Patil as her junior minister in the defence ministry in October last year (after the Centurian tank deal controversy forced C. P. N. Singh to bow out from that ministry). Since then Patil has managed to enjoy her confidence. He has a clean political image and has been successively deputy speaker and speaker of the Mahrashtra Assembly in earlier regimes. But there is one stumbling block in his way. Shivraj Patil is not a Maharashtra Patil, but a Lingayat whose family migrated from Karnataka and settled down in Osmanabad, Maharashtra. This fact, therefore, makes him a political lightweight in the Maratha-dominated politics of Maharashtra. And Patil will also have to contend with a possible Antulay-Vasantdada gang-up against him. Dada ("Shivaji") surprised everyone by inviting Antulay ("Aurangzeb") for dinner at his Delhi residence on 15 April.

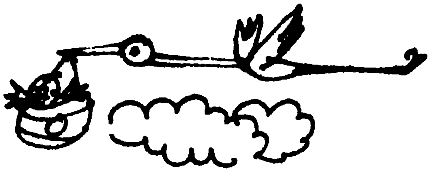
DANGE'S GHOST STILL HAUNTS CPI

THE expulsion of Sripad Amrit Dange does not signal the end of the Dange controversy for the CPI leadership. The pro-Dange members of the national council had approached the 82-year-old leader before the crucial meeting of 12 April and asked him to be present so as to strengthen their hand. Dange told them: "I have my place in history. You worry about yourselves." This irked the pro-Dange elements and they voted for his expulsion for violating party discipline. But the debate on the Dange line—whether the party should align itself with the CPI(M) or go back to its old position of supporting Mrs Gandhi on an issue-to-issue basis, is still very much on. The main argument of the anti-CPI(M) elements in favour of Mrs Gandhi is that she still has a progressive foreign policy. The example referred to is Egypt; once Sadat changed his foreign policy and went into the American camp, a lot of other changes came in its wake in internal policies. The debate is still so strong that the CPI has had to postpone its party congress, due this year, to March 1982.

KALPNATH RAI IN TROUBLE

THE irrepressible Kalpnath Rai, general secretary of the AICC(I), is in trouble. He is in-charge of Punjab affairs and recently sent an adverse report about chief minister Darbara Singh, who is also the PCC(I) chief, to Mrs Gandhi. Nothing wrong with that. But the very next day the full text of the report was published by *The Tribune* of Chandigarh. Darbara Singh has made a representation to Mrs Gandhi that she ascertain how the secret AICC(I) report reached the press.

THE GROWING FAMILY



HAS the stork decided to seek Youth Congress(I) membership? So it seems, because of late it has been visiting too many Youth Congress(I) leaders' homes. The first childbirth took place in the home of the AICC(I) joint secretary in-charge of youth affairs, Krishna Vasudeva Panicker, on 15 April. Three days later, IYC(I) president Ghulam Nabi Azad, MP, was blessed with a son. The homes of IYC(I) general secretary Vinod Sharma, former IYC general secretary Ghufran Azam, MP, and the AICC(I) joint secretary, Arif Mohammad Khan, MP, were also visited by the stork.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

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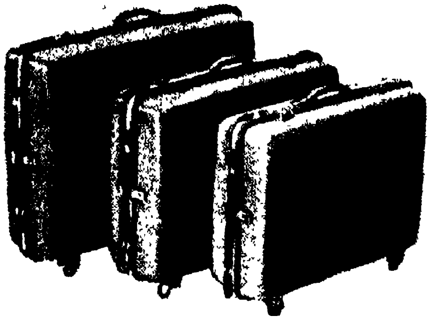

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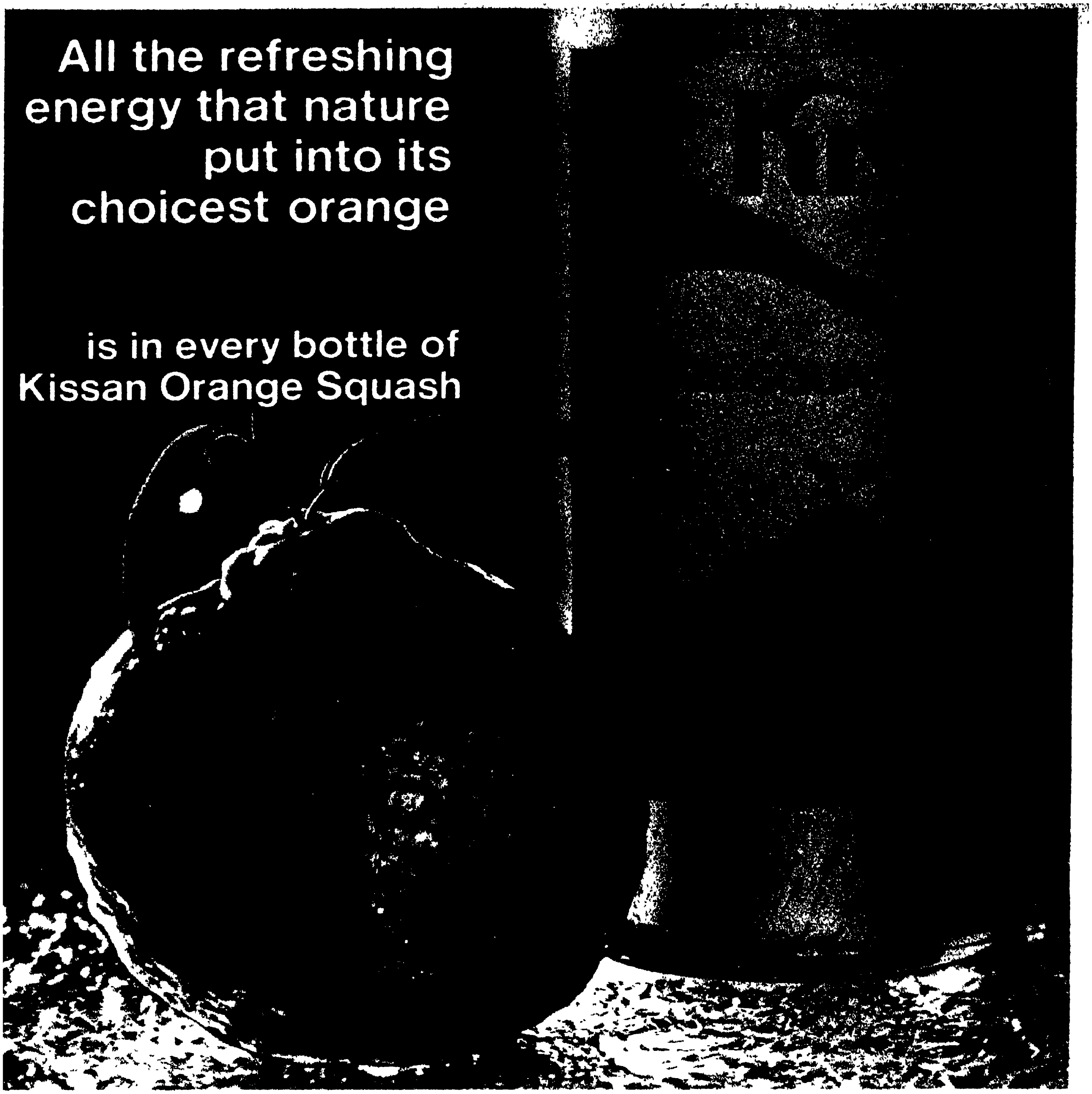
SUNDAY
EXCLUSIVE

BULL IN THE CHINA SHOP

Deng Xiaoping with Subramaniam Swamy

[illegible] details
[illegible] the Janata and
[illegible] the sensational
[illegible] received in Peking



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SUNDAY VOLUME 8
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May 10, 1981

Over the last few months, foreign policy experts have watched the hesitant efforts being made by Peking and Delhi to get on genuine talking terms again. On 6 April Subramaniam Swamy, Janata Party MP and China-scholar landed in Peking he was the guest of the Chinese government. But the welcome he got, including a long interview with Deng, was the best evidence yet of Peking's willingness to come to terms with Delhi The Peking media played up Dr Swamy's visit much more than the visit of the Swedish Prime Minister, who was also in Peking at the same time Dr Swamy himself has written a short history and analysis of the state of Indo-China relations that promises to have far-reaching impact **Page 8**

India has just completed the most elaborate census in its history. The provisional report has a wealth of fascinating data on the 684 million citizens. **Page 36**

This year's national film awards was V Shantaram's 15-star *tamasha* Our special correspondent reports on what happened behind closed doors in Bombay. **Page 42**

Urdu poetry has gone through a sea-change in the sub-continent since partition Urdu poets no longer speak from a pedestal and deal with political slogans They now write about broken dreams and shattered illusions. And Pakistani Urdu poets seem more robust than their Indian counterparts, because they have toiled and survived under an oppresive political system **Page 32**

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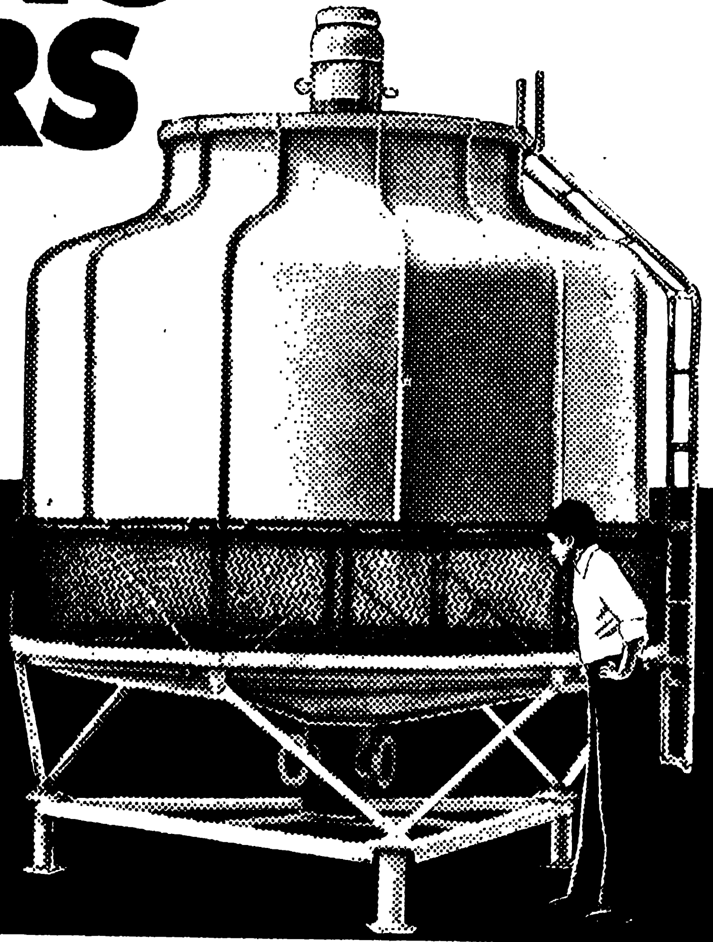

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Will Rao Sahib restore the secretaries' committee's health?

It is a hallowed tradition for the secretaries to the central ministries to meet every week to discuss problems. As the seniormost civil servant, the cabinet secretary is the chairman and chooses the subjects to be discussed. It is a sort of think tank which can sometimes become a task force as happened during the Bangladesh war. The committee has tackled problems as diametrically opposed as ways to act effectively under the Emergency and the processing of the Shah commission report on Mrs Gandhi's rule. But as bureaucrats are adept at the art of balancing and secretaries, the topmost bureaucrats, become pastmasters at it, their recommendations on both the subjects amounted to little more than attempts to please those in power.

Lately, these discussions have become an exercise in futility The meetings are held regularly but they have become a mere ritual. In the words of one secretary: "They are a waste of time, three hours a week." The body has, perhaps, after all these years, begun to live up to its innocuous name, "committee of secretaries"

If this is so, it is mainly the fault of the cabinet secretary who is the kingpin In the Sixties, when the secretaries' committee was at its zenith, it was the cabinet secretary who gave the meetings direction and content. It is true that the calibre of those attending the meeting then was high. Mr P N Haksar, former secretary to the Prime Minister, who in the latter part of the Sixties was the most powerful civil servant, attended the meetings as a member. Mr Dharam Vira, whatever his failings might be later as the Police Commission's chairman, did an excellent job in piloting discussions at these meetings as cabinet secretary.

The Bangladesh war was a superb work of planning, coordination and execution and the secretaries' committee played a leading role in it. It then had effective men like Mr Swaminathan as cabinet secretary, Mr K. B. Lal as defence secretary, Mr Govind Narain as home secretary and Mr T. N. Kaul as foreign secretary taking part in the deliberations. In 1973, when India was in the midst of a financial crisis Mrs Gandhi gave blanket powers to this committee. Ministers had to follow its instructions.

The decline of the committee began during the Emergency when

EXCLUSIVE
EXCLUSIVE
EXCLUSIVE

BY KULDIP NAYAR

the secretaries were anxious to be more loyal than the king and [illegible] justification for all the illegal [illegible] of the government Some of the circulars aimed at making the regime more authoritarian were conceived of and considered at the secretaries' committee

Mr N. K. Mukherjee, who became cabinet secretary after the lifting of the Emergency, could have retrieved the situation. He had the capability But he was bitter about the way most of the secretaries had behaved with him during the Emergency when he was in the dog-house after being removed from the home secretaryship So he wanted to have as little to do with them as possible.

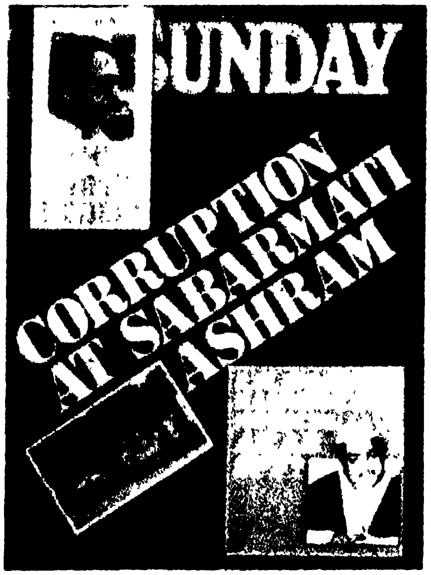
Mr Sukhchain Singh Grewal succeeded him as cabinet secretary but he seemed to be aware that he was chosen only to keep out Mr S. M. H Burney, home secretary, and Mr Balbir Vohra, then petroleum secretary, both junior to him by a few months. Mr Grewal, who was waiting for retirement in the Food Corporation of India, was appointed cabinet secretary so that the two unwanted men would retire or have only a few months left in service by the time his term ended. (Mr Vohra has retired and Mr Burney retires in August)

The secretaries' committee lost the little lustre it had left during Mr Grewal's chairmanship. He was an affable person but [illegible] dynamism Even the subjects [illegible] referred to the committee [illegible] an academic nature. For instance, the whole of April was spent in discussing "development of the Indian Ocean." The secretaries, being generalists, did not have any expert advice to offer. No wonder the discussion was desultory. One talked of the Indian Ocean's strategic importance and another of the presence of the super powers. The development part was mentioned only briefly. The sole worthwhile information put forward was that the potential of Bombay High was 20 to 22 million tonnes of crude a year, as against ten to eleven million tonnes extracted at present

Now that Mr Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib has become cabinet secretary, the discussions will perhaps be more authoritative and meaningful He enjoys Mrs Gandhi's confidence and has the necessary tact and resilience to captain a team and make it work to some purpose He served two different regimes He was secretary to the Prime Minister when Mr Charan Singh held office and continued in the same position after Mrs Gandhi came to power She liked him and did not want to release him. She let him go with reluctance so that he could become cabinet secretary after he reportedly told her that it was the highest position to which every civil servant aspired. It certainly is the highest bureaucratic office but much depends on the person holding it and also on how much freedom the party in power allows him. The same holds good for the committee of secretaries because the cabinet secretary is its chairman.

In Mrs Gandhi's regime, everything begins and ends with her Even the Prime Minister's secretariat has not retained its previous importance. Some people around her bask in her glory, and officials and non-officials wait on them to know the government's mind. This is a strange way of functioning. But then that is Mrs Gandhi's style

In the process, institutions have been devalued. The 'secretaries' committee is only one of them. And what was once a useful institution where a free interplay of ideas produced something worthwhile is now only a talking shop. But perhaps, as Mr Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib appears to have Mrs Gandhi's trust he may regain for the committee its lost importance and [illegible] the great potential to [illegible] [illegible]



"Hai Ram!"

Corruption at Sabarmati ashram (5 April) was shocking. It is a pity that Gandhiji's ashram is in the grip of bias and corruption—the very things• which the departed leader had fought against throughout his life The government's indifference is appalling. it appears to be more concerned about the nationality bill in the UK rather than what is happening at home. Where are all the politicians who had vowed at Gandhiji's *samadhi* to fight against corruption?
Mohd Shoib Siddiqui, Lucknow

Money should play no role at Sabarmati ashram; what is happening now is thoroughly deplorable.
Sarat Chandra Das, Bhubaneswar

Dalpat Srimali must be thanked for raising his voice against the intrigues at Sabarmati ashram. It was painful to read that harijans are being discriminated against in the ashram. I appeal to the Gujarat government to take immediate action.
Biswajit Kar, 24 Parganas

The persons responsible must be brought to book; the sordid story of Sabarmati is a slur on Gandhiji and his principles.
D. Ghosh, 24 Parganas

Gandhi died years ago now Gandhism is dead too.
T. Sarangi, Puri

Had Gandhiji been alive and read Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's cover story, he would have muttered, *"Hai Ram!"*
Pijush Kanti Chandra, Kharagpur

The ashram is national property; a judicial enquiry must be ordered into the goings-on there.
Syed Azam Hussain, Samastipur

Caste obsession

The senseless intolerance of caste Hindus (22 March) reflects an obsession with the cause of harijans. While M. J Akbar's vivid account of atrocities by caste Hindus (Patels) in two Gujarat villages is praiseworthy, any sweeping generalisation can only discredit caste Hindus as a community. We cannot overlook the fact that even those harijans who have taken refuge in Christianity and Islam are also being discriminated against in many parts of the country.
K Govind, Kuttipuram (Kerala)

The cover story was undoubtedly the best piece of reporting in SUNDAY in the last few months
L N Harney, Burhanpur

Caste problems need to be given a serious thought, analysed and solved without any political party interference.
P Hari Kumar, Rajput

Your cover story exposed a weakness in our society Unless the weaker sections are put on an equal footing with the more privileged lot, there is no hope.
Abdul Haleem Khan, Bilaspur

Had Gandhiji lived to see such a brutal caste war being waged by upper caste Hindus in his own home state, he would have been overwhelmed with grief.
Gangadhar Nayak, Rourkela

You published what no other journal dared to publish—the true picture of Gujarat.
R. K. Shah, Jabalpur

Your article is baised and misleading. Reservation implies permanently disabling a particular class of people by giving them a crutch. My point is that they should be helped in other ways to ensure social justice.
Hari Hara Mishra, Bolangir, Orissa

The truth is that caste Hindus cannot tolerate harijans becoming surgeons and behaving like equals. The myth of reservations has been contradicted by the simple example of Binabehn, a harijan girl who is an MA in sociology, with first or second division marks, but could not get a job; now she works as a labourer.
Acharya Prasad, Delhi

Goddess Phoolan

After reading *Phoolan Devi: Queen of dacoits* (15 March) I am convinced that she is a reincarnation of goddess Kali who has vowed to avenge evil and injustice.
Sudhir Kumar Mahto, Jamshedpur

The reason for a simple village girl turning a *baghi* is no other than the one Shubhabrata Bhattacharya gives: oppression. Phoolan Devi's story raises one pertinent question: Is she at fault?
Nani Gopal Das, Agartala

No rebel

The heading *V. C. Shukla: the first rebel?* (5 April) was not appropriate because Mr Shukla is hardly a rebel; he fights shy of even meeting the press! I wonder if he is really capable of overthrowing Mrs Gandhi. He might, however, succeed in mobilising forces against Madhya Pradesh CM Arjun Singh.
Ram Sewak Singh, Samastipur

V. C. Shukla's exit is not that important.
Hari Hara Mishra, Bolangir •

Mrs Gandhi can now parody Dale Carnegie; her book will be entitled *How to shun friends and infuriate people.*
Gopal Ghosh, Bongaon (West Bengal)

Deplorable

The senseless speech quoted in *C. M. Ibrahim, Karnataka minister: Arab spy?* (5 April) proves that Mr Ibrahim is a thoroughly irresponsible minister.
Mobeen Ahmed, Bangalore

The success and popularity of SUNDAY owes much to articles like the one by Louise Fernandes on C. M. Ibrahim.
Mukhtar Ahmed Fardeen, Calcutta

Marxist tragedy

With reference to *Now, the opposition's kisan rally* (5 April), I am surprised at the CPI(M)'s participation. It only helped to indentify people like Sharad Pawar as genuine proletariat sympathisers. What a tragedy!
Marmabina Sen, Bangalore

Nothing great

Hindi and Tamil cinema are overexposed in SUNDAY . While appreciating *The revolution that is sweeping UP again* (5 April), I would like to point out that success stories are not of films like *Kranti* alone. It would be appreciated if coverage is given to other regional films which have taken the box office by storm—like *Premabhishekam*, a modest Telugu production with an engaging theme and no multi-star cast, whose success, in terms of investment and turnover, has been far greater than that of *Sholay* or *Kranti*.
Lakshmi Kamalakar, Dehra Dun

The success of *Kranti* is hardly surprising because Manoj Kumar has always been a popular filmmaker.
B Bose, Jamshedpur

Supposition

Pran Chopra in *Zia totters* (29 March) has not mentioned two important possibilities: that General Zia is in fact Washington's special man planted in the Islamic world to serve US interests; and that the hijacking of the PIA plane was shrewdly planned by the CIA to strengthen Zia's hands by creating an artificial crisis in Pakistan.
Neyaz Ahmed Quraishi, Giridih (Bihar)

Short sighted

The hit generation (29 March) gave the impression that the new-wave movement is confined to Hindi cinema. This is not true. Until two years ago, Kannada films were bagging national awards year after year. Karnataka was, in fact, in the vanguard of the new-wave movement.
R. Lakshman, Honorary Secretary, Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, Bangalore

Anil Saari has overlooked the socio-economic content in *Albert Pinto* and *Aakrosh*.
Surob Chatterji, Chinsurah (West Bengal)

The low-budget film, in order to survive, must also stick to a strict formula: realism in theme, simplicity in approach and treatment, and a focus on human and social problems.
Tish Kumar Malhotra, Delhi

Why does every 'art' film have at least one titillating scene? Possibly that is the formula which accounts for the success of low-budget films at the box office
M. R Haque, Patna

It is heartening to find the balcony*wallahs* patronising low-budget films Let us hope that many more will follow suit.
N. Chandramohan Naidu, Solapur

Naseeruddin Shah

There is also a state called Tamil Nadu where films like Balachander's *Varumavin Niram Sigappu*, Bharathi Raja's *Nizhaigal*, Balu Mahendra's *Moodupani*, and Durai's *Pasi* are being made. It is tragic that Anil Saari has overlooked the south in his otherwise brilliant and critical appraisal of new-generation cinema.
John Sudhakar, Madras

I have noticed that SUNDAY does not give much coverage to films made in eastern India. Considering that this year nine out of the 13 national awards were bagged by Bengali films, it was all the more surprising that the cover story on new-wave cinema made no mention of films and filmmakers from this region.
Susanta De, Calcutta

The real riggers

Barun Sengupta has finally admitted in *Jyoti Basu's time is nearly up (Power and Politics*, 22 March) that the Congress(I) rigged the 1972 West Bengal Assembly elections But it was shocking to be told that the CPI(M) "manipulates elections neatly and quietly." May I remind Mr Sengupta that even during the 'Indira Wave' in 1971, CPI(M) emerged as the single largest party in West Bengal. As for Mr P.C. Sen's view that "with the Left Front government in power, there cannot be any fair elections in the state," it seems that he has forgotten the bitter experiences of the 1972-'73 by-elections when his Congress (O) was harassed by Congress hoodlums
R. Maran, Poona

The Socialist Unity Centre (SUC) and the Congress (U) have no legitimate political base in West Bengal; their charges against the Left Front government are therefore of no consequence. I am convinced that if Assembly elections in West Bengal are held within two or three months, nothing can stop the CPI(M)-led Left Front from winning by a handsome margin.
Biswajit Kar, 24 Parganas

Incomes and prices

Let's not spoil the farmer (8 March) by Barun Sengupta is an eye-opener to policymakers, planners and pampered organised unions. Every increase in salaries or wages of workers contributes to the price rise, for which common people have to suffer. Does anybody think about the millions of agricultural workers and daily wage-earners in the country who are denied the minimum wage approved by the government?
Madhusudan Dash, Kalahandi, Orissa

Mr Sengupta rightly says that excessive attention has spoiled the salaried middle class and industrial workers. In order to prevent farmers from following their footsteps, Mr Sengupta exhorts politicians not to pamper them. But is the issue as simple as that? Farmers have remained silent till now, not because of any patriotic concern for national progress but because they were not sufficiently politicised. Now that they are getting organised, is there any reason why they should not agitate to press their demands? As for politicians' attitude to them, it is anyone's guess they would vie with each other to side with farmers to win their support: pampering seems inevitable.
T. R. Jahagirdar, Parbhani, Maharashtra

Major problem

Minorities commission: twice orphaned? (29 March) once again shows that such commissions create more problems than they solve, especially when they deal with such sensitive issues as the protection of religious minorities. It is not because of government negligence; the approach is entirely negative. Besides, the very existence of a minority commission instils fear in the community it is supposed to protect; for it motivates the minority to be on the guard against the majority.
Benoy Sengupta, Serampore

Spirit of scandal

With reference to S. Kuttan's *Strange story (Opinion*, 29 March), it may be recalled that the CPI(M) did not, at the first instance, agree to a judicial enquiry into the Kerala spirit scandal. DIG Rajagopal Narayanan was initially asked to carry out investigations. But the Youth Congress(U) objected to this, and demanded a judicial enquiry. The marxists reacted by saying that the YC(U) was demanding a judicial enquiry in order to shield the real culprits; they urged the Congress(U), an important partner in the Kerala government, to advise its youth wing to withdraw its demand. When the Congress(U) did not oblige, CM Nayanar reluctantly ordered a judicial enquiry. Meanwhile the Congress(I) was trying hard to get a central agency to probe the affair. The marxists' reaction to this was not unfamiliar: even the Congress(I) was trying to shield the culprits. And regarding the subsequent demand for sacking home minister T. K. Ramakrishnan, it came from all the partners in the left democratic front, except CPI(M).
Govind Shetty, Calcutta

Stay in, or out

It is well known that the Catholic priest should practice celibacy (*Who is celibate?* 15 March). The church wants the services of those who are capable of remaining celibate. But it is a fact that many priests and nuns are eager to experience sex. It is better for them to leave the order and marry than remain in the order, suppress their sexual instincts and ridicule other churchmen. I know of many priests who have left their profession to get married, none of them admits that weakness got the better of them. Instead, they ridicule the church.
C. M. Kurien, Trivandrum

Zeenat's defence

While appreciating the wit in Gautam Bhattacharya's *Last letter (Opinion*, 29 March) I object to the 'naked' criticism of such a talented actress as Zeenat Aman. She is a favourite with many like me who appreciate her talents more than her "severe crisis of cloth."
B. S. Gopal, Calcutta

Last letter

V. C. Shukla: the first rebel? My foot! He is 'the first re-bail.'
Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

Rs 50 for the last letter

BULL IN THE

SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY reports amazing details of Sino-Indian relations under the Janata government and explains the implications of the sensational reception he recently received in Beijing.

When my Swissair flight landed in Beijing (new spelling for Peking), the capital city of the People's Republic of China, on a clear cold evening of 6 April, I could not help thinking back to September 1978 when I made my first trip to China.

In two and half years since my first visit, much water has flowed down the Ganga. In 1978, I was the first Indian politician to come here since 1962. As an MP of the then ruling party in India, there was a perception, naturally, that the voyage had *de facto* official status. It was fairly well known that the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai and I were on the same wavelength on political issues. The Chinese were therefore happy that I was making the trip, and since this was to be the first political contact between China and India, representing together forty per cent of the world's population, there was worldwide interest as well.

But the trip almost never came off. The Chinese invitation first came in [illegible] after the Janata had come to power. I was the natural choice for them to select for the invitation. In my informal meetings with the Chinese ambassador in New Delhi at diplomatic receptions, the latter easily deciphered that I would be the natural person to visit China. I speak Chinese, and have written extensively on the economy of China. As a Harvard professor in the Sixties, I had sought a passport endorsement to visit China from the government in [illegible] [illegible] secretary Mr K. R. Narayanan had written me a stiff [illegible] that it was "unpatriotic" to mak[illegible] it was the same Narayanan [illegible] ambassador in Beijing! (Inc[illegible] the integrity of Narayanan, despite [illegible])

But the 1977 Chinese invitation [illegible] for a year because of pulls and pressures within the Janata Party. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Janata foreign minister, was unhappy at the thought of my going first, and *before* him. My out-and-out support to Morarji Desai had made Chandra Shekhar unhappy too. So, many people went to Morarji and told him to prevent me from going to China—not that it was wrong, but that I was the wrong person. One prominent Janata officebearer told Morarji that since I was speaking against the Soviet Union, the Chinese *being communists* would not welcome me so much for [illegible] knowledge of foreign affairs!

In the beginning Morarji yielded to these pressures. He called me to his residence one day and the conversation in September 1977 went like this:

"Are you going to China?" he asked.

[illegible] *Subramaniam Swamy with China's acting President and Politburo member Ulan Fu.*

CHINA SHOP

"Yes, I am," I replied.

"You had better call off the trip," he said.

"That's impossible. Everything is arranged. If I cancel now, the Chinese will misunderstand," I replied.

"Then I appeal to you not to go," Morarji persisted.

"I want to know why before I say yes to you," I asked.

"You can go to China after Atal (Vajpayee)," he said.

"If Atal*ji* goes first, he will only ogle at the girls and drink Mao-tai. He will not transact serious business," I replied.

"You better have proof for what you are saying," Morarji said to me sternly.

I walked out of his room, but I did what he said. I was indebted to Morarji by then because he had single-handedly prevented a move to expel me from the Janata Party, a plan worked out by some of my erstwhile Jana Sangh colleagues in league with Fernandes and Limaye. Chandra Shekhar had been game for it as well. There were no issues involved, only personality conflicts

In July 1978, I had sought an appointment with Morarji after I had visited Nepal. Signals galore were coming from China that they wanted friendship. Morarji was now more receptive. He explained to me that several world leaders had passed through New Delhi from Beijing, and they had told him about this. But in his characteristic way he said to all of them "Why can't they directly talk to me?" Then Deng Xiaoping, China's No. 1, came to Nepal and gave his now famous "love call." Morarji responded fully. So when I met Morarji, it was in a new setting, both internally within the party and externally. After some preliminaries, the conversation went like this:

"What happened to your China trip?" he asked

"You have stopped me," I said a little hotly.

"But that was last year!" Morarji interjected "Does it mean I can go?" I asked almost incredulously.

"I have already talked to Atal. He is agreeable to your going first. I have told him to call you and explain the background. If you will not stand on ceremonies, you can call him and fix up a meeting," Morarji added, with a smile that I have seen on a cat that had swallowed a thousand mice.

"As far as India-China normalization is concerned, I will not let any ceremony or protocol come in the way," I said So I went to see Vajpayee who, in an expansive mood, authorized a free passage for me to Hongkong by Air India. I set up the details of the trip. The foreign secretary, Jagat Mehta, whom I have known for years, later came to see me, for which there was criticism. I also got the background from the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee in the Cabinet secretariat I also had a long session with Morarji, in which he traced the relations between the two countries as he knew first hand. He gave me the guidelines for my talks with the Chinese leaders in the following terms: (1) The border problems must be resolved without which there can be normalization but no friendship (2) Chinese help to the insurgents in the north-east must stop. (3) Chinese intentions in Kashmir must be clarified (4) Our friendship with the USSR and Vietnam are not negotiable, but we are "genuinely" nonaligned The Russians had also been told much the same thing—that India would not let

Beijing 1978: (seated left to right) Mrs Roxna Swamy, K.R.Narayanan (India's Ambassador), Subramaniam Swamy, and China's deputy Prime Minister, Ji Pengfei.

the friendship with the USSR constrain it from negotiating with China.

Just prior to departing on 31 August 1978, I went to see Vajpayee. His mood had changed since July when I had last met him. He was testy and tense. He had already scheduled a trip to Moscow. When he saw me, he said "*Tumhare trip se kuch nahin nikalne wala hai* (Nothing will come out of your trip)." Then he said, gesticulating, "Tell the Chinese that if they give you nothing, then Vajpayee will not come." I asked: "Do you want me to say that?" "*Hainji, aap hi kahiye* (Yes, you tell them)."

Warning bells sounded in my head, so I darted to Morarji's office. I said to Morarji, "Vajpayee wants me to tell the Chinese that if they make no concessions during my trip, he will not go there."

"You better not say that to them," Morarji said stiffly.

"I feel the same way," I added.

Then Morarji gave me a hint of the brewing trouble.

"If you say that (Vajpayee's message), it will be relayed back here through our ambassador, and Vajpayee will deny that he ever told you that. Then he will say that you have spoiled *his* trip."

A little later I met Mr Bali, the husband of Vyjyantimala, the noted cine actress and Bharatnatyam dancer. He was upset that a cultural troupe to be led by his wife to China, and coinciding with my visit, had been cancelled at the last minute. He said, "It is all because of you." I was puzzled. Mr Bali explained that Vajpayee did not want to give me the privilege to be guest of honour in grand banquets which are inevitably held for such cultural troupes visiting China. My presence in Beijing at the same time would have entitled me to such a position. I could not believe that Vajpayee would go so far, but it was all adding up.

New Delhi 1954: Chinese Premier Chou En-lai's first visit to India

My arrival in Beijing in September 1978 and the reception I got there was heart-warming. The highest ranking leader I met was Ji Pengfei, the Deputy Prime Minister. Mr Ji had been foreign minister earlier. The talks I had with him were full of meaning. Ji seemed to know in advance what, in substance Morarji gave me as guidelines for the talks. He told me that China did not object to the warm relations between the USSR and India, but he said that the Chinese knew them (the Russians) better than we did, and so would like to warn us of the Soviet propensity for perfidy. When I said that people in India were disturbed by past Chinese utterances on Kashmir and the Naga matters, Ji was positively disarming. He said, "The previous government (the Gang of Four's) was indulging in it. That has now been stopped." And on Kashmir he said, "This is a matter between you and Pakistan. If you can settle it between yourselves, where do we come in?" These two implicit policy statements were major departures from the past. Since that date, neither the Janata nor the Congress(I) governments have detected any departure from the stand enunciated by Ji Pengfei. If, for example, the Chinese had wanted to create trouble for us in the north-east in the context of the Assam agitation, they could have done it amply. But they have not. This fact must be borne in mind in the calculus of reciprocity in relations.

> **"If Vajpayee goes first, he will only ogle at the girls and drink Mao-Tai. He will not transact serious business," I told Morarji."**

But the big breakthrough I got out of the talks with Ji Pengfei was a Chinese commitment to defreeze the border question. Till my arrival in China, the Chinese were taking the view that first the friendship must be established, then the border issue could be reopened. Morarji at home was taking an equally tough stand: No border settlement, no friendship. Before I met Ji Pengfei, ambassador Narayanan told me that, on this issue, there was complete deadlock. He said to me, "You know Morarji, you know the Chinese. Tell me, who will yield?" I told him that the Americans have a saying that when an irresistible force meets an immovable object, "something gotta give."

It is an article of faith with the Chinese that not only *what* is to be negotiated is important, but with *whom* it is to be negotiated. The Chinese, by mid-1978, had got over the complex they had had about Morarji Desai because of his "roughing up" of Chou En-lai in 1960. They were delighted when Morarji devalued the importance of the Indo-Soviet Treaty by disowning its secret clauses on the ground that he was ignorant of them. Besides, the King of Nepal, the Presidents of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and, most important of all, of Pakistan, were singing praises of Morarji to the Chinese.

So when I arrived in Beijing, the Chinese had already made up their minds that they would not send me back empty-handed. The Janata government's stock was high in China, and so a Janata MP, especially an associate of Morarji, and also someone who had campaigned for India-China friendship, would have something to say when he returned home.

Ji Pengfei said to me, "We are both big countries, and not in search of territory. Anytime you want to sit down and discuss the border problem, we are ready."

After the meeting was over, Narayanan, who was present at the discussion, congratulated me, and said, "Now I can believe that friendship is a possibility." I too was pleased. So when I met the foreign press in my hotel in Beijing, I was perhaps too exuberant. Instead of using diplomatic and play-safe language, I declared, "India-China friendship is a certainty. The border problem will be solved by negotiation. The concept which will work is that of a maintainable border by which the border line can be redrawn without loss of territory to either side."

Naturally the whole episode made front-page news around the world. Alarm bells rang in the Soviet world. The Soviet lobby in India which has always been well-organized,

> **"If the Janata government had survived, then Morarji would have been in Beijing by early 1981... But a plot to unseat Morarji had been brewing (by September 1978) and Vajpayee was a party to it."**

> **“** The Soviet Union took advantage of the dissent within the Janata Party and used every lever to bring down the government. **”**

well-financed and well-oiled, received the signal from Moscow, and went into action. Vajpayee, who was chagrined that my trip had practically made his into a formality, sent me a coded cipher message in Beijing. It said, “Country greatly embarrassed by your utterances. Please disown your statements and confirm in reply.” In short, he wanted me to commit *harakiri* and that too in Beijing! I told the embassy to wire back, “Morarji is the leader of the Parliamentary Party. I am accountable to him, and not to you.”

When I got back to Delhi airport, press reporters were there. They said that Vajpayee had written me a letter seeking refund of the air-ticket which he had earlier sanctioned out of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations funds. Could I give a reaction? The flight had arrived at 11.30 pm, and I was sleepy. I remember I made a saucy remark about Vajpayee’s propensities.

That whole night I sat up and read the Indian newspapers which I had not seen for the sixteen days that I was in China. Really vicious items about my trip had appeared, and which had gone unrebutted. So when I went to meet Morarji in the morning, I was red-eyed due to lack of sleep, and hurt at the sheer viciousness of the press items largely leaked by the officials of the external affairs ministry who were seeking to ingratiate themselves with their boss, Vajpayee

I had expected Morarji to give me a stern lecture about my statements, but he was just the opposite.

“What has happened to your eyes?” he asked.

“I haven’t slept a wink last night, reading nasty newspaper items,” I replied.

“Newspapers should not bother you. You can never be sure for whom some journalists are working,” he said.

“Yes, but it looks like some in our party have sided with the nasty journalists,” I persisted.

“*Aho rupam aho vani*,” he said in Sanskrit, which describes a donkey which admired a camel for his good looks, and the camel reciprocated by admiring the donkey for his beautiful voice. I had a hearty laugh, and that cleared all the tension in my mind.

Morarji then read out portions of the ambassador’s report which had reached him via the diplomatic bag and after saying a good word about how I conducted myself and the useful dialogue with Ji Pengfei, said to me, “You were too gentle with the Chinese. You have to be careful with them because they often mistake gentle behaviour for weakness Of course, they could have changed. I am myself looking forward to going to China some day. It is the only major country I have never visited.”

I could see that Morarji was thinking ahead—to solve the border question by 1982, and then the Janata Party could contest the national elections on that great achievement. If the Janata government had survived then Morarji would have been in Beijing by early 1981.

I tried to meet Vajpayee after seeing Morarji. When I spoke to him on the phone he said, “*Ab kya milna hai. Aap ne sub kuch bigad diya hai* (What is the use of meeting you, when you have spoilt everything?).” He then declined to fix a meeting.

> **“** The RSS officebearer said: “There was a meeting in Advani’s house, in which the conclusion was that if ever we have to find a replacement for Morarji, it is Chandra Shekhar. **”**

But it was not a simple personality conflict any more. A plot to unseat Morarji had been brewing, and Vajpayee was a party to it. Because of my defence of the RSS against the unfair attacks of Limaye and Raj Narain, a false impression had gained ground that I was a spokesman of the RSS, and that I was doing things at their bidding. My relations with the RSS are too complex to be simply described here, but I never discouraged the impression that I was a part and parcel of the RSS (which I have never been). To their credit the RSS had generally been sympathetic and helpful to me, especially during the Emergency.

As quirks of fate would have it, I went, shortly after my return from China, to Jamaica on a parliamentary delegation. When we were settled in our hotel rooms in Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, one of my party colleagues on the delegation, dropped into my room and said: “Swamy, you better discard Morarji. He will not be the Prime Minister after October 15th (1978).”

“Oh? Who will be in his place?” I asked.

“Chandra Shekhar” he replied.

Beijing 1954: Prime Minister Nehru accompanied by Mrs Indira Gandhi on return visit.

“Will he be anointed or elected?” I asked testily.

“Look, even the RSS has agreed on his name. So you will also have to agree,” he said.

“I don’t take orders from the RSS. I am their friends, not their slave,” I replied.

The news was disturbing, although on first blow seemed preposterous But a day later I got a call from an RSS activist in New York. He said that Vajpayee had arrived there for the UN session, and I should fly to New York after the Jamaica conference to attend an RSS-organized lunch session in honour of Vajpayee and me.

“Is *Atalji* agreeable?” I asked.

“He has to agree!” said the activist as if Vajpayee had received an *adesh* (directive) from Nagpur.

When I reached New York on 28 September, the outlines of the brewing coup became clearer to me. At the lunch Vajpayee was depressed (as he generally is when a crisis is looming). He was sore with me because my China trip had aroused the worst instincts in the USSR. Before landing in New York, Vajpayee had been to Moscow. There, from eyewitness accounts I learnt that the Russian bear had mauled him in the verbal exchanges. From Vajpayee’s talk I got the impression that he was now not too keen to go to China, now scheduled for 19 October. I asked him (in

Hindi), "Are you going to China, or not?"

"First, I am going to India tomorrow," he giggled.

"But you have just come, and besides what about your UN speech on 6 October," I said.

"That is now shifted to 12 October, and I don't know if I will be foreign minister then," he replied.

"What is the urgency?" I asked, ignoring what I thought to be his wit

"Don't you know that a three-day Parliamentary Party meeting has been scheduled starting 3 October?" he asked a little irritated.

"But that is a routine inter-session meeting," I persisted.

Vajpayee did not answer, only giggled in his inimitable way. Throughout the lunch he criticized Morarji, and said I had made a mess of the China visit His last remark was, "*Morarji nahin chal payega* (Morarji cannot continue)." I retorted, "*Na aap unko chalane denge* (You will not let him)."

That is the first time I began to suspect that the Janata government's efforts to normalize relations with China were going to have repercussions in our domestic politics, and that the USSR may be willing to pay any price to stop this normalization. Pro-Russian elements had already gathered around the dissidents within the Janata Party, and were provoking them by invoking the Lohia-orientation on China in the socialist spectrum of the Party.

Kathmandu 1970: The first meeting between leaders of China and India after 1962. Kuo Mo-ju, China's vice-chairman greets President V V Giri

I caught the Air India flight that evening, and upon arrival in Delhi, went to meet Morarji.

"There appears to be a plot to overthrow you," I said.

"Let there be," Morarji said.

"Aren't you going to organize something?" I asked.

"I don't believe in such things," he said.

"Then I am going to do something," I suggested

"I won't stop you, but I won't help you either," he said.

At least, assure me that on the third day of the Parliamentary Party meeting, you won't resign out of disgust or some such sentiment," I said.

"Why should I resign?" he countered.

I knew that this conversation was going to get nowhere, so I took his last remark as an assurance and went off to the RSS *karjalava* (office) There I asked the office-bearer designated to deal with political parties the question now that was buzzing in Delhi. "Is the RSS supporting a change of leadership in favour of Chandra Shekhar?" I asked.

"There was a meeting in Advani's house, in which the conclusion (*sab ki rai*) was that if ever we have to find a replacement for Morarji, it is Chandra Skekhar."

> **"** I caught the Air India flight that evening, and upon my arrival in Delhi, went to meet Morarji. "There appears to be a plot to overthrow you," I said. "Let there be," Morarji said. **"**

"That means that you favour toppling Morarji?" I asked.

"*Yeh abhi tak tai nahin hua* (Not decided yet)," he said blandly.

I knew the RSS jargon. The last remark meant that they indeed had decided to support the toppling, but they wanted to play safe.

When the Parliamentary Party meeting commenced, what was intriguing was that except H M. Patel, the top ministers were absent. A little later, Vajpayee came in, and took the seat in the last row of the Central Hall where the meeting was held. Chandra Shekhar was absent throughout the three days. George Fernandes was abroad Therefore, Morarji held the fort all by himself. But he held it well, and the Parliamentary Party resolved its faith in him via a resolution.

The attack had centred on two items: (1) Kanti Desai (2) China policy. The Kanti Desai matter one could understand, but what was so crucial about the China policy, I wondered? When Rameshwar Singh, Raj Narain's *chela*, who has only a vague idea about the location on the globe of most countries, launched a bitter attack on my China trip, I began to sense the motivation. Mrs Mrinal Gore, whose claim to fame was providing water taps to Bombay slums, also made what sounded like tutored comments on the China policy. Somewhere the thread of commonalty was there to be picked up. The thought that the Soviet lobby was orchestrating the criticism appeared ridiculous, but it crossed my mind. I did not assign any value to it, till July 1979 when the government actually fell.

IN July 1979, when the Janata government collapsed, all the political elements known to favour a tilt in our policy toward the Soviet Union assembled against Morarji. Not one person, I repeat, *not one person with a known pro-Soviet position* was for Morarji, while those who favoured a more balanced foreign policy were divided on either side. George Fernandes is by no means pro-Soviet. Nor is Purshottam Kaushik. But both go limp in front of Madhu Limaye who by then had emerged as the sheet anchor of the onslaught on the Janata government. Jagjivan Ram, whose sympathies are well known, was manipulated by Rajni Patel and by Mrs Gandhi's erstwhile *alter ego* Dinesh Singh. Rajni Patel, a suave, smooth-talking money-spinning one-time communist, had also captured the intellectually inferior Devaraj Urs and Maharashtra's political Natwarlal, Sharad Pawar.

Sharad Pawar, an opportunist politician without a parallel, descended on Delhi in July 1979 and nearly brought tears to Morarji Desai's eyes by swearing allegiance to him,

> **"** Mr Sanjay Gandhi was very interested in visiting China; he was a great pro-normalisation catalyst. The invitation (to him from China) arrived in early June 1980, but Sanjay died. No one was as pleased with Sanjay's death as the Soviet lobby. **"**

> “Meeting Deng was an honour I did not expect, because Deng is China's No. 1, and he rarely meets anyone except Prime Ministers, official delegations and journalists seeking interviews.”

and told him how he would work day and night to keep Morarji's gaddi secure. I remember Morarji telling me with rare emotion that Sharad Pawar was going to help and said, “You are against him, but he has proved himself in this crisis.” I replied, “If my life depended on it, even then I wouldn't trust this snake.”

Two years later, I asked Y. B. Chavan why he declined Morarji's more sensible offer of coalition in July 1979 for a dilapidated ramshackle coalition with Charan Singh. Y. B. Chavan said to me: “You know I have a weakness for Sharad Pawar. Sharad was insistent that I support Charan Singh.” There were other factors, he said to me, but this was the clinching factor. So much for Sharad Pawar!

After collecting, collating and sifting evidence and facts, I am convinced that the Soviet Union took advantage of the dissent within the Janata Party and used every lever to bring down the government. I will not blame the USSR for our own weakness, but we have to be clear that the stakes involved in our China policy are very high. The Soviets were clearly planning the occupation of Afghanistan when Morarji went to Moscow in June 1979. Morarji's stubborn refusal to open a military front with Pakistan, or recognize the Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea, angered Kosygin in March 1979 so much that he used his TV time on Doordarshan to issue a stern warning on our China policy.

So in formulating our China policy, one has to recognize the stakes involved. The Soviet Union cannot do much to prevent a determined India from normalizing relations with China, but in the absence of a substantial consensus in favour of normalization the Soviet lobby in India can play havoc. I have learnt from usually reliable sources that the Soviet Union's priority is to seek to nip the normalization [illegible]

[illegible] working overtime in India doing just th[illegible] levels of operation starting with “disinformation” techniques such as planting grossly false stories of the Chinese building bases in Pakistan, or fishing for trouble in Assam, then proceeding to activize the Soviet lobby to canvass opinion in India, and more.

The death of a prominent pro normalization person can cause a setback on foreign policy issues. Within the Congress(I), Mr Sanjay Gandhi was a great pro-normalization catalyst. After the Lok Sabha 1980 elections the Speaker of the Lok Sabha casually told me that Mr Sanjay Gandhi was very much interested in visiting China, and therefore did I think the Chinese would invite a parliamentary delegation to their country? I told him that I couldn't say, but if an occasion arose, I would find out. In April 1980, I went to deliver a few lectures on the Indian economy at the Beijing University. I had talks with Mr Ulanhu, who functions as a President of China (he receives the Ambassadors' credentials). There in the course of talks, I passed on the Speaker's query.

The invitation arrived in early June, but Sanjay's death put the matter in cold storage. Then the inopportune recognition of the Heng Samrin's government botched everything up. Death is in God's hands, but no one was as pleased with Sanjay's death as the Soviet lobby in India.

> “I am not in favour of India becoming anti-Soviet. In fact, I can appreciate the help the Soviets have given. But appreciating that does not justify our closing our options to develop our relations with other countries.”

Normalization with China is essential on its own merits. The aftermath of 1962 has introduced such an air of irrationality into our thinking that our concepts are dominated by imagined conspiracies and a sense of paranoia. Therefore, the normalization idea can be pushed only by those who carry credibility with the non-communist opinion in the country. If a communist advocates good relations with China, it will not receive serious attention from the public. That is why the China-India friendship associations carry so little conviction with the people, whereas a person such as myself can draw crowds on this issue.

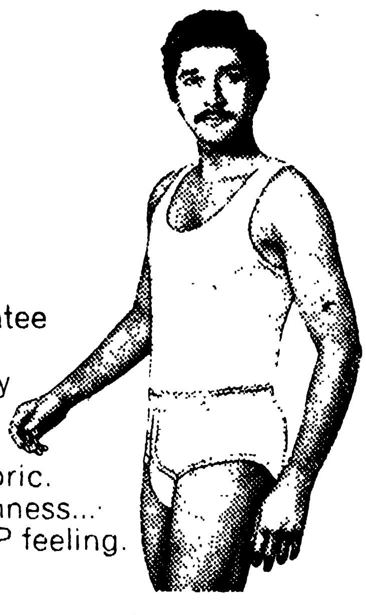
The reason for my advocacy of normalization with China is based on the recognition that 34 years of independence for us has meant a transformation from a weakling to the fourth largest military power in the world. Recent events also prove that, economically, China and India are evenly matched. And, most important of all, in strategic terms, the world has ceased to be bipolar, and has become multipolar. India has the potentiality of becoming one of the poles. For that, friendship with China is vital.

New Delhi 1976: Chen Chao-yuan (right) China's Ambassador to India presenting his credential to President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.

Another reason for befriending China is that it is our neighbour. It is generally wise to be on good relations with one's neighbours, if one can help it. During the Janata rule, we proved that if we approach our neighbours with tact and flexibility, our neighbours respond in ample measure. It was the Janata government that solved the thorny problems of the Salal Dam with Pakistan, trade and transit treaty with Nepal, and the Farakka with Bangladesh. This exposed the earlier Congress government claim that our neighbours were fractitious and intractable.

The third reason, for seeking friendship with China is that we are currently paying too high a price for intimate relations with the Soviet Union. We entered into a treaty obligation with the USSR entirely because of our fear of the Chinese. The ensuing “special relationship [illegible] created a widespread impression in the world th[illegible] genera[illegible] foreign policy approach on critical matte[illegible] de-

Only for those who like to be sure



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> “Why not ask for the Kailash-Mansarovar portion of Tibet in return for parts of Aksai Chin?”

tailed to the Soviets! Thus, when the Soviets brazenly occupied the nonaligned neighbour Afghanistan, India under Indira Gandhi has practically welcomed it (judging by the January 1980 UN speech of our delegate). Subsequently, India's posture is a “fudged” one. The government's latest attitude is that they oppose “all foreign intervention by anyone anywhere.” This is a “Smart Alec” approach which will fool no one, only it will bring the country into contempt as a sanctimonious fraud.

The USSR needs India more than vice versa. Therefore it is the Soviets who ought to be accommodating India, and not the other way round. Under clause nine of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, the Soviets were anyway obliged to consult India *before* going into Afghanistan, and continuously thereafter. But the Soviet Union has done none of that. This is a unilateral interpretation of the Treaty for their benefits, and yet India has never lodged a protest with the Soviets for treating us as a junior partner in the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

If, therefore, we normalize relations with China, the main reason for our unwarranted proximity to the Soviet position on international issues will cease to exist, and thereafter we can have a more healthy relationship with the Soviet Union. I am not in favour of India becoming anti-Soviet. In fact, I can appreciate the help the Soviets have given in economic and military matters. But appreciating that does not justify closing our options to develop our relations with other countries or not opposing the Soviet's patently wrong steps such as in Afghanistan. My vision of India is that it should become a pole in the multipolar world. Unfortunately, there is a generation gap between me and my colleagues—who are in their mid-fifties and sixties—who think that opposing the Soviets means advocating a client status with the USA. The psychology of our Nehruvian generation is warped. They cannot visualize India as a power in its own right.

Therefore, if India, China, and other Asian countries, particularly Pakistan and Indonesia, can get into a working relationship then Asia will become a dominant factor in world politics. It is this grand Asian profile that emerges on the horizon if first China and India normalize relations.

As my plane taxied to a stop in the modern new Beijing airport, it was with this conceptual framework that I came prepared.

The Chinese now clearly consider me “an old friend” (*lao peng you* in Chinese). The Chinese make very good friends and very strong enemies. While in China there is nothing as pleasurable as being a friend; and nothing as uncomfortable as being a foe. That the Chinese consider me a good friend was ratified when they told me, “You had expressed a wish to meet Mr Deng Xiaoping. Mr Deng in turn is looking forward to meeting you.”

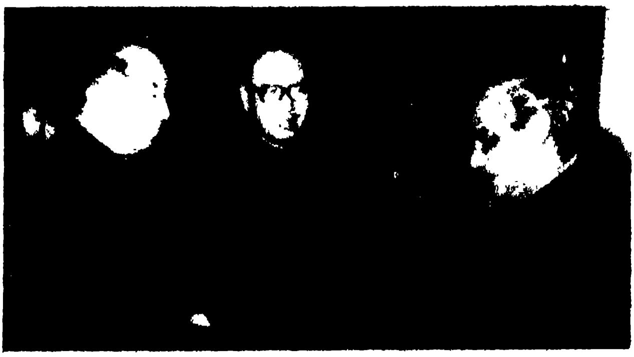
It was an honour that I did not expect, because Deng is China's No. 1, and he rarely meets anyone except Prime Ministers, official delegations, and journalists seeking interviews.

> “In the coming days, lobbies are going to erupt to shake Mrs Gandhi's government, or to scare her... I regard Mrs Gandhi's China policy and how it shapes as the crucial test of her commitment to nonalignment.”

My meeting Deng was not an accident either. The Chinese media made that clear later. The evening television news, which everyone in China's diplomatic enclave watches intently, carried my meeting with Deng in its lead story. Next day, the *People's Daily,* the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, carried the story on its front page with the headline “Deng Xiaoping Meets Swamy: Holds Talks.”. A photograph of the two of us talking was also prominently published. In comparison, the meeting of the visiting Swedish Prime Minister was carried on the back page of the newspaper. The Chinese, great believers in symbols and gestures, were obviously sending multiple signals. Which I hope the government of India's radar has picked up. (I must express also appreciation of our external affairs ministry and the Indian embassy for the excellent logistics support.)

Much of what each said to the other has appeared elsewhere, so I will not repeat it here. What I will attempt here instead is to fit Deng's views into a conceptual framework for future Sino-Indian friendship. Elements of this framework are:

- China recognizes the Indian parliamentary system in which the executive branch is important, but the legislative branch is crucial in opinion formation. Therefore, China has now invited a parliamentary delegation to visit China. Thus they opened another channel to India
- China has accepted India's pre-eminent position in the subcontinent. Deng told me that India is the elder brother in the subcontinent. The Chinese want India to shoulder the implied responsibility of that relationship. In turn, China has told all our neighbours including Pakistan that China would welcome their having good relations with India.
- China is not going to make an issue in bilateral relations of such matters as Sikkim, Kashmir, India's recognition of Heng Samrin's government, and even Indo-Soviet relations. In turn, I think, we should also stick to bilateral issues till we develop a common world view.
- China is prepared to discuss *and* discuss *ab initio* the border question till we can reach a mutually accepted negotiated settlement. In return I think India ought to prepare some alternatives for the negotiation. We should be prepared to discuss some exchanges of territory. For example, why not ask for the Kailash-Mansarovar portion of Tibet in return for parts of Aksai Chin?
- China considers itself a part of the Third World, and a developing country in league with India. Therefore, in international political and economic forums, the two countries should work together. To begin with, I think India ought to support China's application for IDA credits from the World Bank. At present, we are seeking to obstruct China's access, which is wrong.



Beijing 1979: India's foreign minister A.B. Vajpayee shaking hands with Hua Guofeng.

This framework is something we can easily accept and should. But “the going is not going to be easy.” In the coming days, lobbies are going to erupt to shake Mrs Gandhi's government, or to scare her. If on this issue, Mrs Gandhi seeks the democratic opposition's support, I am confident it will be forthcoming. I regard Mrs Gandhi's China policy and how it shapes as the crucial test of her commitment to non-alignment. ■

Dhanbad's latest 'Guru'

[illegible] not use guns and not once did he shed blood yet he was a powerful man whose eye for black gold and [illegible] at the right places earned him an enormous fortune. Ajai Mishra reports on the man and his troubles

There was nothing remarkable about the short, dark man clad in *dhoti-kurta* who emerged from the first class waiting room of Dhanbad railway station on 6 April this year; he [illegible] sort of person who wouldn't [illegible] a second glance The CBI men were equally inconspicuous They followed him out of the station and just as he was about to hail a cab, put him under arrest. By the time coal-king Tara Pad Singh, alias Guru, was produced before the chief judicial magistrate in Dhanbad, the news of his arrest had travelled as far north as to the corridors of power in New Delhi and south to Calcutta where Guru's girlfriend and accomplices lived.

T P Singh (50) was born in Madhukunda village in the Purulia district of West Bengal into a very poor family A bright student, he never got beyond matriculation as his family could not support him any longer In 1948 he took up a clerical job at Mozwa coal mine. In 1955 he joined the eastern railway as a commercial clerk in the Asansol division and his services were terminated in 1966 after he was charged with breaking a railway wagon containing synthetic yarn Singh joined Durgapur steel plant as assistant canteen supervisor in [illegible] and very soon was feathering his nest by making bogus vouchers for the purchase of eatables and other provisions under his jurisdiction. This bogus-voucher racket came to the notice of CBI Calcutta and as many as 13 cases were registered against him (Most of the cases are still subjudice in Calcutta and Asansol courts.) Before his services could be terminated in 1971, Singh built up his contacts with big and small coal contractors, truck drivers and a few political personalities He grew aware of the quick buck in coal—a realisation which eventually helped him to amass a fortune worth over Rs five crores in just two or three years

Technically, there was nothing grossly illegitimate about his initial involvement with coal. As one of his close associates, Motilal Chakravarty later revealed to the CBI, Singh was introduced to then energy minister K C Pant by none other than the firebrand Youth Congress member from West Bengal, Priya Ranjan Das Munshi. [illegible] apparently spoke to then [illegible] Ltd (CIL) chairman [illegible]

[illegible] CIL chairman K S Garewal did he help Singh?

In search of black gold. for whom?

ing it in the open market That he was buying coal in the name of an ex-army officer's wife was not what got him into trouble: unable to curb his criminal instincts, he started forging delivery orders and sold them to eager buyers in the black market at exorbitant prices. He was subsequently arrested by the enforcement branch of the West Bengal police, chargesheeted and produced in Burdwan court

However, he was soon released on bail and he formed an association of Small Coal Consumers and Traders, registered at 38/39, Shradhanand Park in Calcutta, with himself as president A few trusted friends were installed as the other office-bearers He revived his links with ECL and was once again selling coal in the open market The association, however, died a premature death on two accounts: first, in 1977 the government decided to put an end to the free sale of coal, second, Denzong Cooperative Society in Burdwan, which had been dealing with T P Singh's association filed a complaint that it had been cheated by him Five of Singh's trusted associates were subsequently arrested Kulwant Singh, Vimal Goenka, Shankar Goenka, Bachan Arora and Ram Awatar Sharma. But Singh managed to get anticipatory bail from Calcutta High Court.

Winding up his association whose notoriety had received due publicity in coal circles, Singh shifted his hunting ground from ECL to Bharat Coking Coal Ltd(BCCL) In November 1978 he made a trip to TISCO's Jamadoba colliery at Jharia; his object was to study the prospects of buying rejected coal lying at the mine. But what eventually caught his fancy was not the rejected coal but Bishwanath Agarwal, alias Bissu, an employee of BCCL's sales office at Jealgora Singh's business associate and friend S. K. Sharma introduced him to Agarwal. Agarwal explained the technicalities behind BCCL's coal supply: among other things, it was necessary to obtain the all-important recommendation from the government of West Bengal in order to procure coal from BCCL. Singh was eager to see an authentic copy of recommendations issued by the government of West Bengal and Agarwal obliged. Singh saw the document and remarked that it would be impossible for him to get such a recommendation, though an identical document would not be difficult to forge Agarwal was game and the two struck a deal: Singh would pay him Rs 50 for each tonne of hard coke supplied on the strength of false documents.

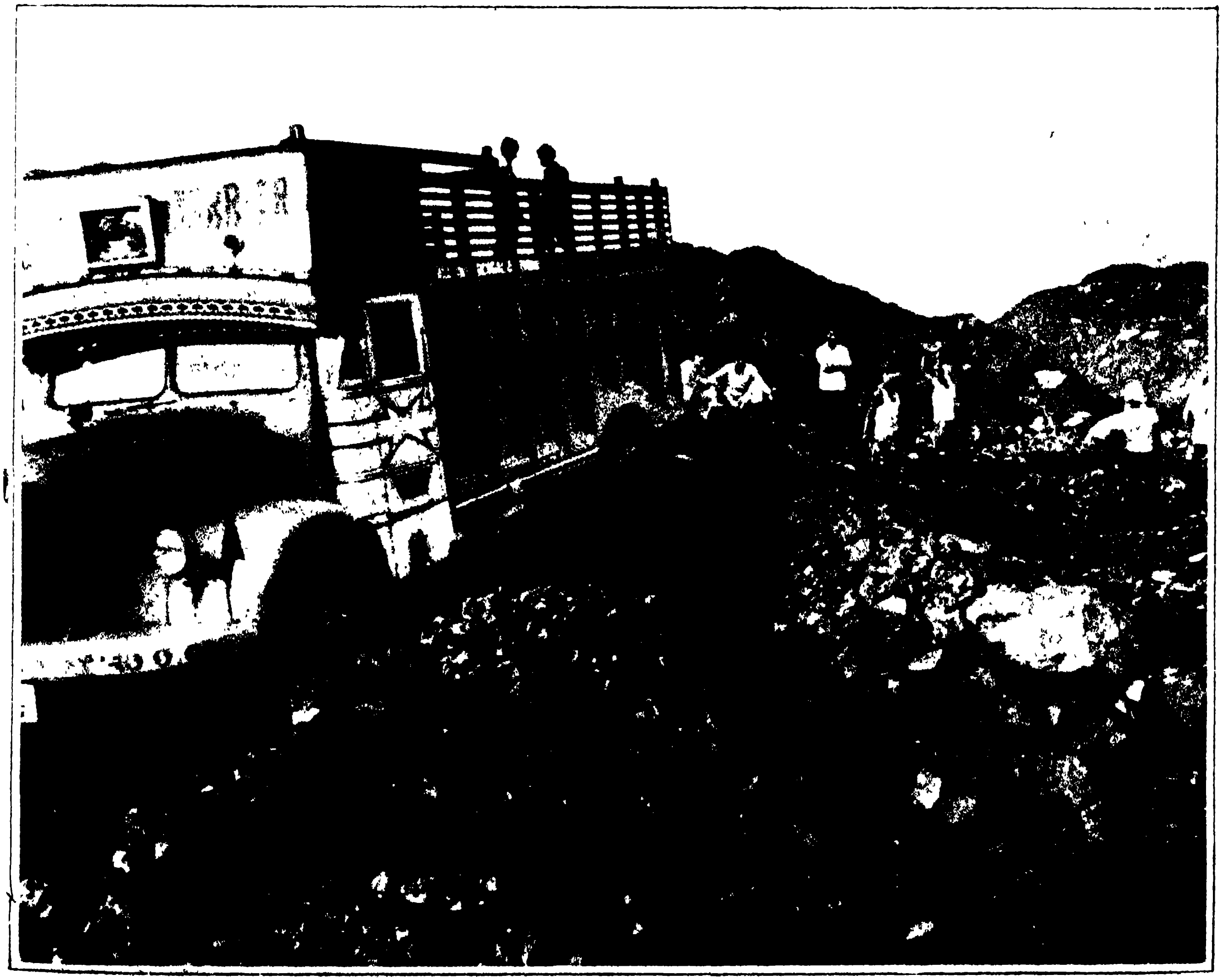
Natwarlal specialised in escapes; T. P. Singh in forgery. But for his BCCL connection he had to work extra hard and with meticulous care. Motilal Chakravarty was made incharge of printing letterheads of fictitious firms and West Bengal director of industries and their rubber stamps as well. The letterpads were printed by Hindustan Printing House at 132/B Amherst Street in Calcutta. Signatures were forged by a few unemployed graduates recruited by Singh for the purpose. Among these few experts were Robi Bhattacharya and Amit Mukherjee. The more complicated signatures were forged by Singh himself. These documents were treated with special care by CIL additional chief sales manager who, being a close friend of Singh, forwarded them to BCCL. Meanwhile, Singh had struck a good rapport with BCCL deputy sales manager and one sales officer and that ensured safe passage and consideration of his forged documents. It was Agarwal's job to eventually procure the delivery orders from BCCL and hand them over to Singh who had now shifted his headquarters to Hotel Prince in Jharia.

T. K.Deo, additional chief sales manager of CIL (the parent body of BCCL) proved to be a thorn once the CIL fixed a quota of 30,000 tonnes of hard coke for West Bengal in 1977. Since this quota had already been alloted, Mr Deo took a tough stand and it was only after Singh proposed 'interesting terms' to him that he relented. Once, when Singh failed to 'reward' him in time of services rendered, Mr Deo sent a telex message to BCCL to stop further supplies to the 40 fictitious firms lauched by Singh. But Singh himself had such contacts in BCCL that he managed to intercept the message. And later, when BCCL sent a letter to West Bengal director of industries seeking verification of the genuineness of 60 firms receiving coal, the letter never went beyond the BCCL despatch section and was eventually delivered to Singh. He read the letter and made out a suitable reply in the name of director of industries which was posted to the appropriate authority in BCCL.

The CBI got wind of Singh's latest misadventures sometime in December, 1979. And finally on 25 January 1980, CBI officials conducted a raid on Hotel Prince in Jharia. They arrested 17 people and seized an assortment of incriminating documents: forged release orders, letterpads of various district industry offices and bank drafts. Simultaneously, 46 houses alleged to be those of Singh's accomplices were raided in Jharia, Dhanbad, Asansol, Calcutta, Purulia and Ranigunj. The houses of three BCCL and CIL officials were also raided.

The most important arrest was that of Motilal Chakravarty who began his career as a broker of immovable property and later joined Singh to become his most-trusted lieutenant. Motilal provided some important clues which led to a subsequent raid on Singh's girlfriend Malti Sinha's residence at 27, Naveen Chand Boral Lane and his own house on Akhil Bihari Lane in Calcutta. Jewellery worth Rs 10 lakhs and Rs 1.53 lakhs in cash were recovered from Malti Sinha's house. While his vast empire crumbled, Singh made a desperate attempt to divert the CBI's attention by filing false cases against its officials. And meanwhile, many CIL and BCCL officials—who vehemently denied their links with the coal king—were spending sleepless nights.

Transporting coal for the blackmarket?



Cabinet reshuffle in the offing?

By BARUN SENGUPTA

The capital is once again rife with rumours that Mrs Indira Gandhi is planning to make major changes in the central cabinet some time after the end of the current budget session of Parliament. It is not that the Prime Minister has said anything in public but, according to well-informed politicians, officials and businessmen, new people will be inducted into departments like defence, industries and steel and mines which still do not have ministers of cabinet rank. The changes seem more than likely since some of Mrs Gandhi's present cabinet colleagues have proved, beyond doubt, their ineffectiveness.

Mrs Gandhi has never continued with one set of ministers for very long; nor has she allowed any minister to continue functioning in one department for too many years. She prefers change and there is no reason to suppose that she has given up that preference now. In fact, she is in a much better position at the moment than she was immediately after the formation of her first and second ministries. Today, her position as the supreme leader in the Congress(I) is unchallenged, and no one dare oppose, even remotely, any of her decisions.

Though Mrs Gandhi's ability to implement a major cabinet reshuffle is unquestioned, there is no reason to suppose that she has finally decided on either the content or timing of her action. She may put forward a suggestion now and then gauge the general reaction, but that does not mean that she has made up her mind. For, when she acts, she does so without prior notice. Even her close associates are very often taken by surprise. Only Mr Rajiv Gandhi today may know what is really in her mind. However, what can be said with certainty is that the cabinet reshuffle is long overdue, judging by some of her remarks. For instance, the Prime Minister is reported to have asked Mr L.K. Jha to examine the present ministerial divisions and suggest rearrangements wherever necessary. If this is done, some ministers may lose their portfolios. The Prime Minister is also reported to have made some "adverse" comments to those close to her about the performance of some of her cabinet colleagues. Apart from that, she has also assigned some important additional work to some of her ministers. Perhaps she is trying them out for more responsible jobs in the future They now have to prove their mettle.

Political analysts in the capital, however, feel that the names of Mr Zail Singh, home minister, and Mr R. Venkataraman, finance minister, figure prominently in the list of changes to be made. Then, the ministries of defence and industries are still being looked after by the PM herself. Contrary to common belief, Mr Zail Singh has sound common sense and a sharp memory. But his problem is that he cannot express himself in English which is still considered an essential requirement for the home minister of India. This apart, recently the home ministry has also handled some major issues ineptly. If Mr Zail Singh is shifted, who will head the home ministry? External affairs minister Narasimha Rao's name was once suggested. But if he shifts to home who will take his place? It is unlikely that Mrs Gandhi will shift Mr Rao from external affairs as she is very satisfied with his performance. Is she planning to give home to Mr N. D. Tiwari, the present planning and labour minister? This seems quite likely, for Mr Tiwari has of late been actively associated with the Assam problem.

Mr R. Venkataraman is considered by Mrs Gandhi to be "efficient but rigid." In fact, she is reported to have remarked to some of her close associates that the finance minister should be more flexible and political in his approach. She is also taking into consideration the failure of the "bearer bond scheme" which was handled by Mr Venkataraman's ministry. But if Mr Venkataraman is shifted, it will be to an important ministry; probably industries. Who then will take over from Mr Venkataraman? Will it be Mr Pranab Mukherjee or Mr P. C. Sethi? Mr Mukherjee is still considered to be one of the most efficient and "politically dependable" members of Mrs Gandhi's cabinet. Mr P. C. Sethi too is considered effective and efficient.

Will anyone be chosen to independently head the defence ministry, or will Mrs Gandhi prefer to keep it to herself? If home is taken away from Mr Zail Singh, will he be given defence? It is certain that Mr Zail Singh will, in any case, retain an important portfolio.

The cabinet minister in greatest danger of losing his portfolio is Mr C. M. Stephen, minister for communications, as he is considered to be a failure. Mr Stephen is, of course, trying to put the entire blame on the officials of his department, but this is unlikely to satisfy the Prime Minister. According to well-informed sources, Mrs Gandhi, for "some reasons," is also not satisfied with the performance of Mr A. P. Sharma, minister for tourism and civil aviation. But has Mrs Gandhi's dissatisfaction reached a point where Mr Sharma will be sacked?

It is still being predicted that the minister for energy, Mr A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhuri, will be dropped from the central cabinet. But it is more likely that he will be shifted to some other ministry. In fact, Mrs Gandhi has not displayed any signs yet of removing Mr Choudhuri. She is not in the habit of removing ministers from minority communities without making proper alternative arrangements for them. Before Mr Choudhuri is removed, a Muslim Congress(I) MP will have to be brought into the limelight, and an alternative Muslim leader will have to be identified in West Bengal.

Some of the state and deputy ministers are expected to get more important portfolios or even independent departments. Among them is Mr Maganbhai Barot, deputy minister in the finance ministry, who is considered to be the minister closest to Mr Rajiv Gandhi. The other minister to be watched is Mr Sita Ram Kesri, minister of state for parliamentary affairs. Some new ministers of state and deputy ministers are also expected to be appointed during the next reshuffle.

Will any of the old guard of the party, like Mr M. L. Sukhadia, Mr Brahmanand Reddy, Mr Swaran Singh and Dr Channa Reddy get a berth in the next reshuffle? I am afraid not. People who might cause problems for Mr Rajiv Gandhi in any situation will not be placed in any important position by Mrs Gandhi. Congressmen who have some independent standing and are veterans of the national political scene should not expect to gain important positions in the Congress of Mrs Gandhi anymore.

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But easy to recognise
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Why the earlier Assam talks failed

Will the mid-May talks bring peace?

Gauhati: At the very first talks between the government and the AASU (All Assam Students Union) and the GSP (Gana Sangram Parishad), held in New Delhi on 2 February 1980, Delhi accepted in principle five of the seven demands of the agitation. But a crucial question was not settled: who was the "foreigner"? Who would be deported from Assam? The questions had still not been answered till the last unsuccessful round of negotiations, held in New Delhi from 11 to 16 October 1980.

As we go to the press, a fresh round of talks between the agitation leaders and the government of India is scheduled to be held sometime in the middle of May. The foundation for this round was laid by Mrs Gandhi herself during her recent visit to Silchar on 12 April. She asked Assam CM Mrs Anowara Taimur to meet the agitation leaders and discuss the preliminaries for the resumption of talks on the "foreigners issue." Subsequently, Assam's home minister, Mr Ramesh Chandra Saharia, and finance minister, Mr Keshub Chandra Gogoi, volunteered to sit with the agitation leaders to do the groundwork for the fresh talks.

The failure of the October talks had had severe repercussions in Assam. The angry agitation leaders called a *bandh* in the Brahmaputra valley on 27 October 1980; MLAs were *gheraoed* and there was large-scale violence in many places. Apart from the CRP and the BSF, the army had to be called in to restore law and order. The government too took action to break the morale of the agitation. Army engineers broke the year-long oil blockade (SUNDAY 7 December 1980) and subsequently the blockade on the movement of plywood, jute, cane and bamboo collapsed. And the momentum of the agitation too seemed to have been punctured. The call given by the AASU and the GSP for a 24-hour non-cooperation movement on 6 February this year in protest against New Delhi's failure to hold further talks was ignored by most government employees. Under pressure now, AASU and GSP leaders now asked for a peaceful and constitutional settlement of the issue. They wound up their agitation programmes on 11 February 1981 with a 12-hour "mass fast" at the Raj Bhavan in Shillong. A week later, on 18 February, they decided for the first time to join any further talks with the government of India "without preconditions."

But why did the talks fail so many times? What were the intractable issues on which no agreement could be reached? A look at what went wrong in the past will certainly help avoid problems in the future. We place the positions of the agitation and the government on key matters side by side.

The Assam agitation leaders

Mrs Gandhi at her first talks

• The principle of detection of foreigners

AASU: Foreigners should be detected mainly on the basis of the Constitution and the present laws, including the Citizenship, Passport and the Foreigners Acts. In doing so, the National Register of Citizenship (NRC) of 1951 and the 1952 electoral rolls should be used.

Government: Foreigners will be detected on the basis of the Constitution, any relevant international treaty, national committments and human considerations. The ration card might be a valid document to decide citizenship. Hindu foreigners could be given special treatment (thereby implying that religion should also be a factor in detecting foreigners).

• Deletion of foreigners' names from voters' lists

AASU: Names of all the identified foreigners must be deleted from the voters' lists before any election is scheduled in Assam.

Government: "Foreigners" who entered Assam after 1971 will be detected and their names will be deleted from the electoral rolls.

• Deportation/distribution of foreigners

AASU: In the interest of the sovereignity, integrity and secular status of the country, the foreigners detected should be deported from the country and those whom the government fails to deport for reasons best known to them, may be settled in India, but it should be ensured that the burden will not fall on Assam alone. The burden of a national problem must be shared by the whole nation.

Government: Only those who entered Assam after 25 March 1971 alone will be deported, and Assam should house those who came in the 1951-1971 period.

- **Constitutional safeguard**

AASU: The inner line permit should be introduced for the next 15-20 years to prevent the re-entry of those "foreigners" who have been sent out of Assam.

Government: No.

- **Identity cards**

AASU: Identity cards with photographs must be introduced for all eligible Indian voters residing in Assam.

Government: Foreigners who entered Assam between the years 1951-71 will also be given identity cards.

- **Border, and other long-term measures**

AASU: Expeditious and effective steps should be taken to prevent any further influx of foreigners into Assam by strengthening border security and registration procedures. The government should erect, in due course, either a "permanent wall" or the creation of "no man's land," or such other suitable permanent obstruction all along the border to ensure border security with adequate forces, so that one checkpost becomes visible from the other.

Government: Adequate measures have been taken.

- **Birth and death and household registers**

AASU: Birth and death registers in all blocks, villages and towns should be strictly maintained in order to prevent any infiltration of foreigners' names into the voters' lists and household registers.

Government: Household registers can be prepared without detecting foreigners.

Pradeep Dasgupta

Branding continues in Bihar

Sahib Mahto, the branded boy

Begusarai (Bihar): In the beginning of April, there was a sensation in this small town (barely 75 kms from Patna), when 12-year-old Sahib Mahto recounted his pathetic tale of captivity and torture before local government officials. For over a month, the young boy said, he had been kept confined in a dark, dingy room where he would be continually branded with red, hot iron rods, and beaten up with kitchen tongs. He was not even allowed to scream. If, however, he did, only to ease the pain, the torture was intensified. At best, only a sob would be permitted. Lest he run away, a bell was tied round his body.

This barbarity, as the boy complained, was perpetrated by the boy's master, Mr K. D. Jha, an executive engineer of the Bihar State Electricity Board. The others who aided him were his wife and his peon. Sahib Mahto's only crime was that he was poor and that he happened to be from the same village as Mr Jha's in-laws. That gave enough reason for Mr Jha to employ him and the young boy was forced to become a servant in the Jha household. Apart from cooking, Sahib was made to do all types of odd jobs around the house, in an effort to keep Mrs Jha happy. At one point of time, Sahib could bear it no longer and tried to run away. He was caught and subjected to the most inhuman treatment.

Later, for some unknown reason, Sahib was released from captivity. He met local officials and told them about the suffering he had to undergo. On the advice of the officials, an FIR was filed by Sahib and a case instituted against his tormentors. The police had no alternative but to arrest Mr Jha, his wife, and the peon.

Even as the accused await trial, constant pressure is being exerted by the accused on Sahib's family to withdraw the case. In fact, the accused have even threatened the family with dire consequences, if they pursued the matter.

S. P. Sagar

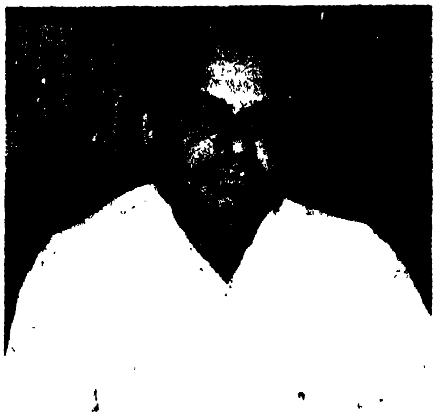
HARYANA

Will Mr Bhajan Lal be the next CM?

Chandigarh: The last couple of months have been very troublesome for Haryana's Congress(I) chief minister, Mr Bhajan Lal. His party president, Mrs Indira Gandhi, has received, in two instalments, serious charges of corruption against him and about half-a-dozen of his cabinet colleagues. Such charges can unnerve any chief minister and more so Mr Bhajan Lal since he became chief minister on the wishes of the Prime Minister. To add insult to injury, Mr Bhajan Lal has been constantly refused a hearing with Mrs Gandhi, where he could have explained his position. Mr Bhajan Lal's future, for the moment, seems bleak for he has been told that Haryana should prepare itself for general elections before June 1982.

The two memoranda and the impending elections has only isolated Mr Bhajan Lal. Those who had joined hands in supporting him on the common "Hate Bansi Lal" plank feel that this is the opportune moment when they should project themselves as prospective candidates for leadership in the state. Among them are the central agriculture minister, Mr Rao Birendra Singh, the Himachal Pradesh Congress(I) Committee chief, Mr Harpal Singh, the central minister of state for petroleum and chemicals, Mr Dalbir Singh, and the Congress(I) MP Mr Chiranjilal. That they are ambitious and willing to come back to the state is well known: Mr Rao Birendra Singh feels that he holds sway over an important community—the Ahirs—in the state and that he alone would be acceptable to a majority of the people; Mr Dalbir Singh feels he represents over 25% of the voters and his being a Harijan placed him above the others in the race for leadership and Mr Chiranjilal's contention is that he is known for his honesty and if Haryana could have a Gupta chief minister, he had as much right, being a brahmin. There are two other candidates who have a natural claim to leadership—Mr Bansi Lal, the former CM and, of course, Mr Bhajan Lal himself.

Bhajan Lal

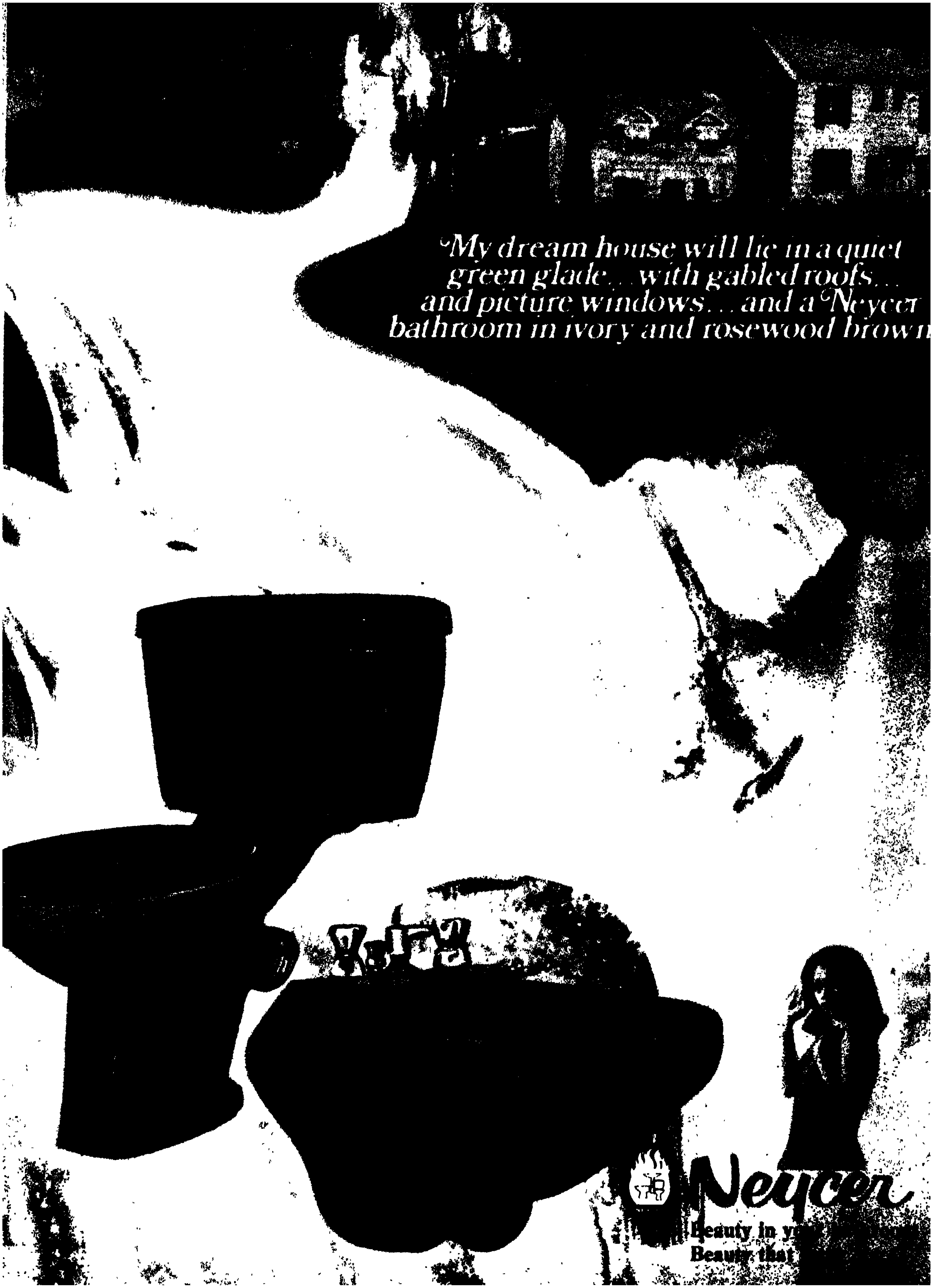


TARUN CHAKRAVARTY

While Mr Bansi Lal is still revered as the architect of modern Haryana, he has not been able to convince Mrs Gandhi that he could be an asset to the party in the state by attracting the jats who owe their allegiance to the Lok Dal. Perhaps, his overexposure during the Emergency is another reason why Mrs Gandhi does not want him to lead the state. Mr Bhajan Lal, on the other hand, has all the qualifications necessary for becoming the CM but with the charges of corruption against him, he hardly stands a chance.

While the incumbents fight it out among themselves on who is fit to become CM, the conflicts within the party continue. This despite the warning given by Mrs Gandhi. The conflicts have not been kept behind closed doors. In fact, in a reported confessional statement made in a Bombay weekly, *Prachhand*, the editor wrote that his source of information for the series of articles on the political situation in Haryana was none other than Mr Bansi Lal's legislator son, Mr Surinder Singh. The Prime Minister has no choice but to go in for someone who is non-controversial as a politician and has the capacity to lead the party to victory in the state.

Satish Kumar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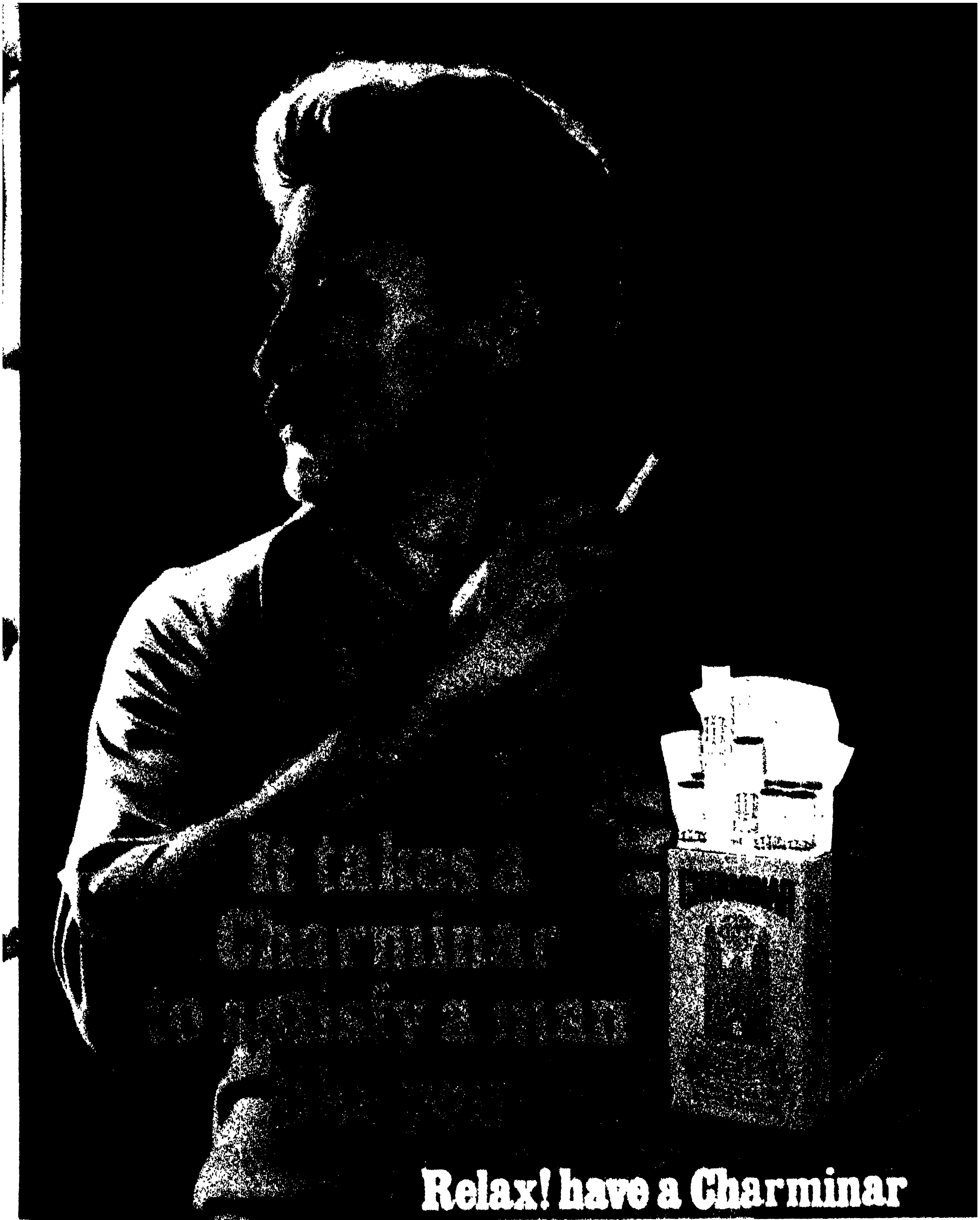

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SABOTAGE

Was the PM's life really in danger?

New Delhi: Five top officers of the engineering and security departments of Air India were dismissed on 29 April. They are: Mr P. Kharkar, the director of engineering, Mr A. S. Karnik, deputy director of engineering (maintenance), Mr T. K. Raisinghani and Mr R. Srinivasan, security managers, and Mr N. S. Y. Rao, the senior security officer. Their termination came in the wake of the enquiry carried out by intelligence officials, following the detection of the attempted sabotage to the Air India Boeing 707 *Makalu*,which the Prime Minister was going to use in her forthcoming foreign tour. But even while the suspension orders are executed, questions still remain regarding the alleged sabotage of the aircraft.

Was the attempted sabotage of Air India's Boeing 707, *Makalu* (Civil Aviation registration no. VT-DPM) aimed at the life of the Prime Minister? The startling disclosure made by the union home minister, Mr Zail Singh, in the Lok Sabha on 27 April has left many wondering if the defects reportedly in the aircraft on 17 April, 18 days before the PM was expected to use the aircraft, were indeed aimed at sabotaging her foreign trip.

According to the home minister's statement, *Makalu*, which was earmarked for use by the PM during her trip to Switzerland, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (from 5 to 13 May), returned to Bombay from Abu Dhabi on 15 April. Periodic inspection of category 'P 3' started on the aircraft in the Santa Cruz hangars of Air India on the same day. Two days later, on 17 April, all the necessary control cables were inspected and were certified to be satisfactory, except for one elevator cable which was found to be slightly frayed. On 20 April, the cable was replaced. On that day, some other "unnatural" defects in the cable system of the aircraft came to light. Following this the engineers were ordered to inspect all the cables thoroughly. These checks revealed that four vital cable systems—those relating to the elevator, rudder, horizontal stabiliser and rudder trim—had been affected. The engineers came to the conclusion that these defects could not have been due to normal wear and tear of the aircraft.

Mr Zail Singh said that the cables had been cut in a manner so as to "ordinarily preclude detection." He further stated that experts had concluded that it was a "clear case of attempted sabotage." Said, he: "If the mischief had not been fortunately defected in time, this would have resulted in crash of the aircraft, not immediately but after a lapse of some time."

Why did the home minister make a statement regarding an Air India aircraft? Should not this job have been left to the civil aviation minister, Mr A. P. Sharma? Aviation experts contacted by SUNDAY said that "cables cut in a manner to preclude detection," was unacceptable in aviation parlance. They said that the Boeings were aircraft with a fail-safe detection method. Due to this, there is no fault in the aircraft which is undetectable. Every aircraft is subjected to periodical tests and checks by licensed and qualified engineers. After every flight, whether it be for five minutes or five hours, there is a check, known as the Transit-A check. Thereafter there is a Transit-B check, then a 100-hours check, and so on. Each of these checks are carried out on the basis of a check list provided by the manufacturers of the aircraft. The manufacturers, in turn, base their check lists according to the guidelines of the Federal Aviation Authority of the USA.

Undetectability, therefore, could arise only if the checks are not carried out properly, the experts say. In any event, if an aircraft is to be used by a VVIP, it is subjected further to checks, including anti-sabotage checks. Even if a sabotage was intended against the PM, it is unlikely that it could have been executed more than a week before her departure. Moreover, a costly aircraft like a Boeing 707 could not have been kept grounded for such a long period due to the PM's trip. The sabotage, therefore, could have been directed at the aircraft for other reasons as well.

Our Delhi Correspondent

CONFESSIONS

'I was forced to put up an act'

London: Remember Linda Lovelace? The blue movie star of the early Seventies whose name appeared in books like *Inside Linda Lovelace* and *Intimate Diaries of Linda Lovelace*. Well, she only did, obtrusively and on film, all those unbelievable things that please men and foster their fantasies, but did them willingly, for her own pleasure. The Lovelace film *Deep Throat* was the chic-porn of its time and everyone including professors, politicians and their wives, made it a point to see it. In that era, teeming with lacklustre "libbers" grumbling about women's dislike of being sex objects, such persons thought it wonderful to observe explicit sex without feeling any qualms about it, since the star just adored what she was doing and said so in countless interviews. She claimed she was really a nymphomaniac and spoke of her insatiable fascination and reverence for every conceivable sexual act.

But only the most innocent and uninformed among Britons have not heard of Linda Lovelace. Thus, on a quiet Saturday evening a few weeks ago, when she set many a drawing room ablaze, with what she insists is the truth relating to her past, in a televised confession, it shattered the serenity of male chauvinists and boosted the morale of feminists, all in one sweeping statement.

Now it turns out she "never experienced any pleasure" and indeed, hated, loathed, and was terrified of what she was doing and did it only because she was forced every step of the way by her then husband and jailer, Chuck Traynor. She was continually threatened with violence by him and his sidekicks.

The idea of the confession was to promote her new book, *Ordeal*. If one goes by her appearance on TV, she did not look one bit a porno-heroine. The simple dress, the unglamorous way she had done her hair gave the impression of her being, if anything, puritanical.

For two and a half years, she says in her book, Traynor abused her physically and mentally, took sadistic satisfaction at watching her endure the worst provocation, and even forced her, against her will, to become his wife so that she could not testify in court against him. She performed and he got paid. "If I did what he told me, I lived. That was the deal," she maintains. Incidentally, daughter of a policeman and waitress, she was really Linda Boreham. Her mother was given to uncontrollable fits of rage. A beating with a broom-handle and a torrent of abuse was in store for Linda if she returned home after 11 pm. Sex was taboo in conversations in the Boreham household, despite Linda having given birth to an illegitimate child which her mother put out for adoption. She had no money and little education when she met Traynor, who promised to take full responsibility for her. Reassured of her future, Linda decided to go and live with him. The benevolent man then ran short of money—he had a drug-smuggling case pending against him—and he started making lurid demands on her, which went from criminal to worse.

The way she tells it, the humiliation enforced on had her living on painkillers and dope merely to inject a numbness into her body and brain. Among her celebrated clients, incidentally, was Sammy Davis, Junior. Traynor made the switch to Hollywood, and the new surroundings and public prominence seemingly gave her the confidence and opportunity to escape. It was generally known that Traynor had found another "queen" and, therefore, Linda had been left alone.

It is hard not to feel skeptical about such a story. How could Traynor assert such control over her?Could she not have run away earlier? Is it not incredible that the once sex-symbol of the pornfilm-industry ended up on state security? But the contents of her latest book, she says, has come out in print after she went through the stiffest lie-detector test, and no one mentioned in it has sued her as yet.

Ashis Ray

Pahadia's troubles are not yet over

Jaipur: Even as members of the Rajasthan Congress(I) ministry await the outcome of the meeting between Mr Jagannath Pahadia and the Prime Minister, the question that is uppermost in their minds is, will the CM continue in office till the end of his term? The question has, in fact, been haunting the mind of the chief minister himself.

What had apparently caused the jitters was first the election of Mr Ahmed Bux Sindhi as the deputy speaker of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha, much against the wishes of the CM who had nominated Mr Taquiddin for deputy speakership. (SUNDAY 26 April). Then came the resignation of Mr Ramnarain Chaudhury, president of the PCC(I) and a nominee of Mr Pahadia. Mr Chaudhury's rather belated list of names of office-bearers was rejected by the high command on the grounds of being partisan. Subsequently, Mr Chaudhury was asked to hand in his resignation. Coincidentally, the resignation came at a time when Mr Pahadia inducted Mr Sheesh Ram Ola, one of Mr Chaudhury's chief political enemies, into the state ministry. Now that Mr Chaudhury's resignation has been accepted, Mr Pahadia's apprehension that his erstwhile friend-turned-enemy will spread more stories about his inefficient administration, may turn out to be true. Indeed, since Mr Buta Singh's report on Mr Pahadia's administration (SUNDAY 26 April) more harm has been done to the CM's confidence for it came as a shock to the chief minister.

Even while the CM's confidence was tottering, Mr Pahadia gave full vent to his anger against his political detractors. A large number of houses built in a colony developed by Mr Shivram Sharma, a Congress(I) MLA, were razed to the ground by the Urban Improvement Trust bulldozers resulting in a damage of property worth lakhs of rupees. Incidentally, Mr Shivram Sharma was one of the four MLAs who had earlier met Mrs Gandhi to complain against the non-functioning of the Pahadia government. In another instance of vengeance, another deputationist, Mr Shriram Gotewala, was served a notice for the payment of a bill of over Rs two lakhs as penalty to the state electricity board, for misuse of power during the Janata rule.

Perhaps Mr Pahadia's fears about his continuing in office are exaggerated. The anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat has spread to parts of Rajasthan, though in less violent forms. It seems unlikely that given the prevailing tension in the border areas of the state, the high command would like to heighten the tension by ousting Mr Pahadia, himself a harijan.

Milap Chand Dandia

The CIA: USA's illegal emigrant smugglers

Washington: Perhaps the biggest crises confronting America is the one of illegal emigrants. Current estimates place the numbers of illegal aliens in America at nearly six million. Every year they keep on coming. That places the figure at one illegal entry to every legal immigrant admitted into America. Illegal immigrants circumvent every loophole in the immigration laws of the USA. They sometimes stumble across the US-Mexico border to a rain of bullets. Many are shot dead. They need not do that if they only knew the laws.

An often neglected, frequently glossed over, clause in the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1949 states that illegal aliens can gain entry into America for high treason of their motherland. This section of the law is almost unknown and even immigration officials had to thumb through old volumes to track down its contents, when it came up, somewhat unexpectedly, in a bill sponsored by Representative Elizabeth Holtzman to amend the Immigration Acts.

Section 29 of Rep. Holtzman's bill sought the repeal of an innocuous immigration act (Section 7 of the Act of 20 June 1949 better known as the CIA Act of 1949) which reads: "Whenever the director (of the CIA), the attorney general, and the commissioner of immigration shall determine that the entry of a particular alien into the United States for permanent residence is in the interest of national security or essential to the furtherance of the national intelligence mission, such alien and his immediate family shall be given entry into the United States for permanent residence without regard to their inadmissibility under the immigration or any other laws and regulations, or the failure to comply with such laws and regulations pertaining to admissibility. *Provided*: That the number of aliens and members of their immediate families entering the United States shall in no case exceed 100 persons in any one fiscal year." Put more bluntly the director of the CIA has the authority to admit 100 illegal immigrants, who in the normal course would have been denied admission into America under one of 30 categories of banned people provided these people are willing to commit high treason in their homeland.

In a letter dated 30 October 1979 the then director of the CIA, Mr Stansfield Turner, said that the act was "critical to the fulfilment of the foreign intelligence mission of the Central Intelligence Agency." Mr Stansfield wrote that apart from defectors brought into the United States under the US Defector Program, Section 7, enabled the CIA to admit aliens who "place their careers and very lives in jeopardy for the sake of our country."

General council Morrison testified before the subcommittee, charged with looking into Rep. Holtzman's bill, that Section 7 was never invoked on humanitarian grounds but only to further the intelligence mission. "The history of the use of this authority," Morrison said, "Has clearly demonstrated its value in intelligence collection and its need for future collection." Morrison further admitted that the section was designed to "permit the admission of people who would otherwise be inadmissible."

Section 7 is even far more sweeping than the parole-giving authority of the attorney general under which he has the power to permit entry to any alien, if it is in the national interest to do so. In fact, the parole provision is invoked every year to enable thousands of refugees to enter. But, unlike parole which requires the entrant's status to be reviewed every six months, Section 7 allows permanent residence to the alien. Apparently one major disqualification required to be overcome for people admitted under Section 7 is the fact that most have been members of the Communist Party, which is one of 30 disqualifications for admission into the USA.

But so sweeping is the power granted to the CIA under Section 7, that as Rep. Holtzman said: "..theoretically, drug traffickers, persons convicted of serious crimes or other undesirables could be admitted into the United States."

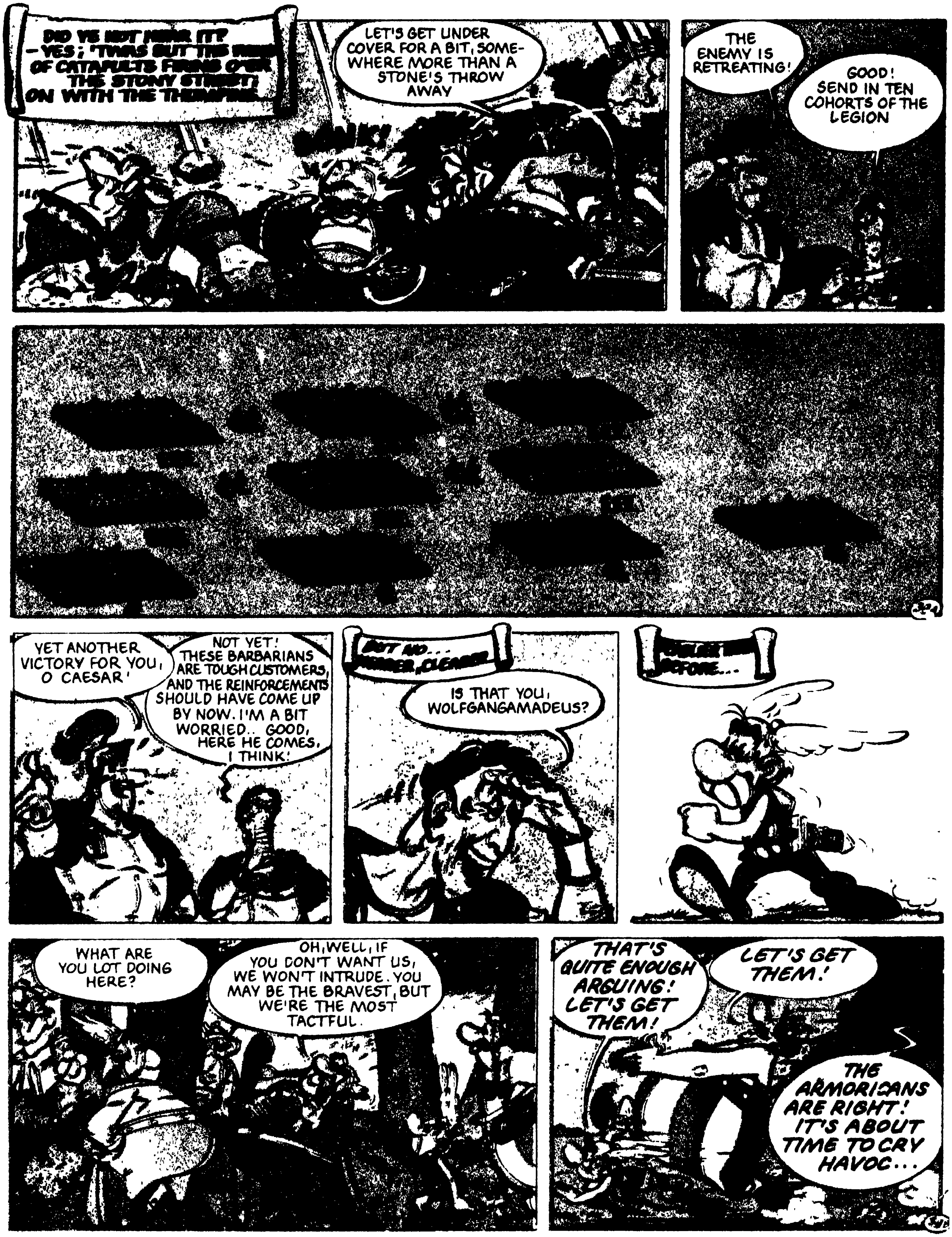
The final report, however, of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy to the Congress and the President in March 1981, has made absolutely no mention of Section 7. But, this commission appointed by the President in 1978, was a different body from the Holtzman Committee, whose report has yet to come in. It did, however, have the power to consider Section 7, but apparently chose not to review it. It is unlikely that the move to repeal the Section will muster much support in the Holtzman subcommittee, considering the manner in which the CIA has gone hammer and tongs to protect its privilege.

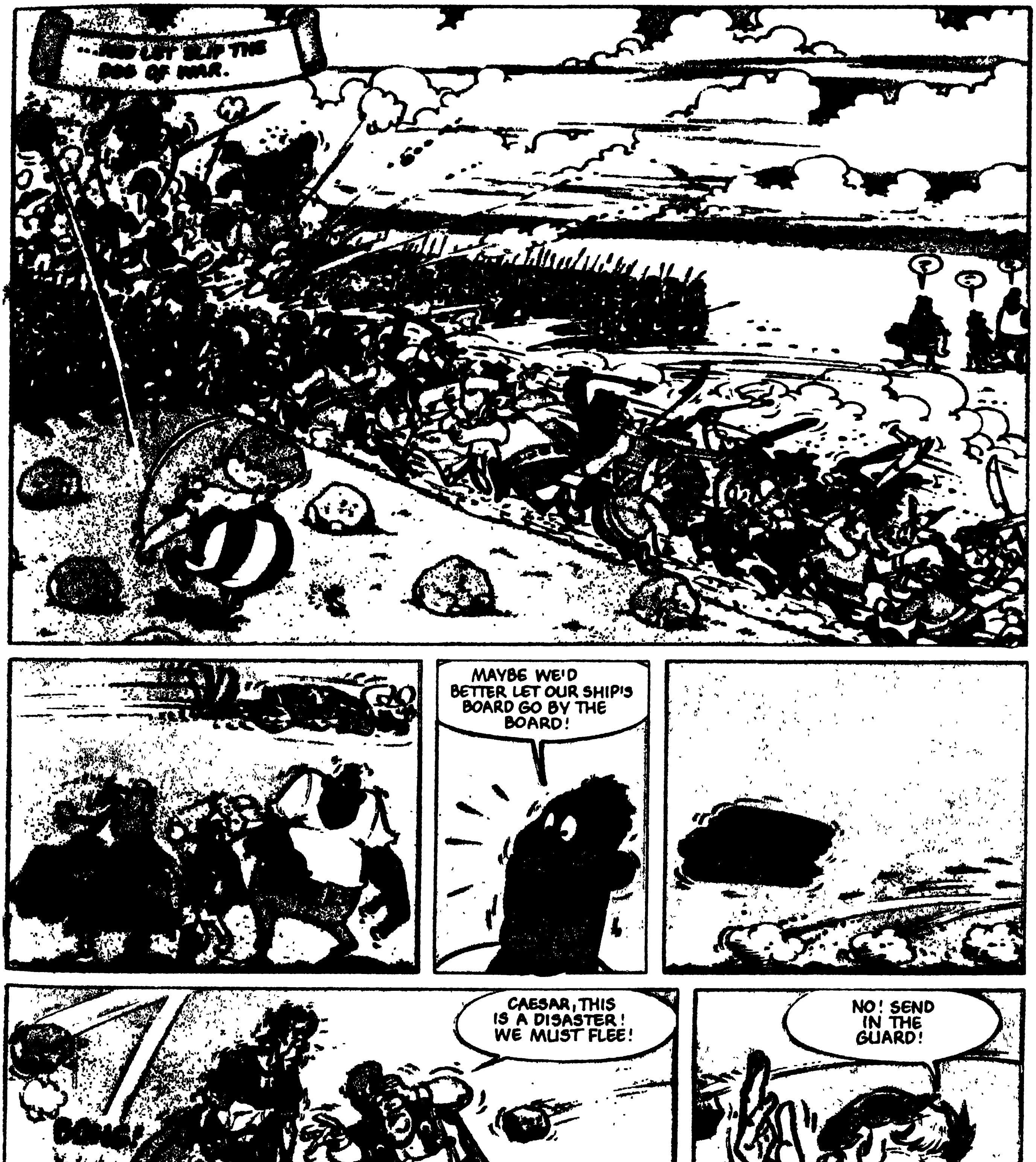
Nonetheless, the very move to repeal the section has served to bring into focus what Carl Wack, Assistant Commissioner of Immigration, told the committee was "the most closely held pieces of information that we process." The irony is that the normally vigilant American press notorious of ferretting out the inner secrets of Capitol Hill has uniformly missed the revelations that are now a matter of public record.

Achal Mehra

BELGIUM

by GOSCINNY and UDERZO


DID YE NOT HEAR IT? — YES; 'TWAS BUT THE [illegible] OF CATAPULTS FIRING O'ER THE STONY STREET! ON WITH THE THUMPING...
LET'S GET UNDER COVER FOR A BIT, SOMEWHERE MORE THAN A STONE'S THROW AWAY
THE ENEMY IS RETREATING!
GOOD! SEND IN TEN COHORTS OF THE LEGION
YET ANOTHER VICTORY FOR YOU, O CAESAR!
NOT YET! THESE BARBARIANS ARE TOUGH CUSTOMERS, AND THE REINFORCEMENTS SHOULD HAVE COME UP BY NOW. I'M A BIT WORRIED.. GOOD, HERE HE COMES, I THINK!
BUT NO... NEARER, CLEARER
IS THAT YOU, WOLFGANGAMADEUS?
DEADLIER THAN BEFORE...
WHAT ARE YOU LOT DOING HERE?
OH, WELL, IF YOU DON'T WANT US, WE WON'T INTRUDE. YOU MAY BE THE BRAVEST, BUT WE'RE THE MOST TACTFUL.
THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH ARGUING! LET'S GET THEM!
LET'S GET THEM!
THE ARMORICANS ARE RIGHT! IT'S ABOUT TIME TO CRY HAVOC...


...AND LET SLIP THE DOG OF WAR.
?
?
?
MAYBE WE'D BETTER LET OUR SHIP'S BOARD GO BY THE BOARD!
BONG!
CAESAR, THIS IS A DISASTER! WE MUST FLEE!
NO! SEND IN THE GUARD!

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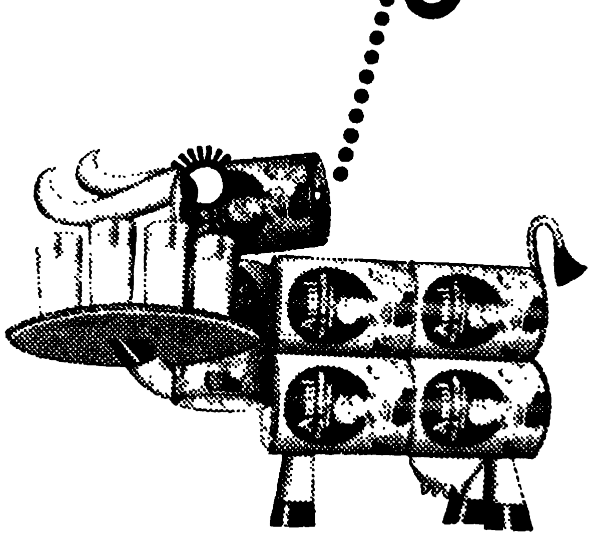

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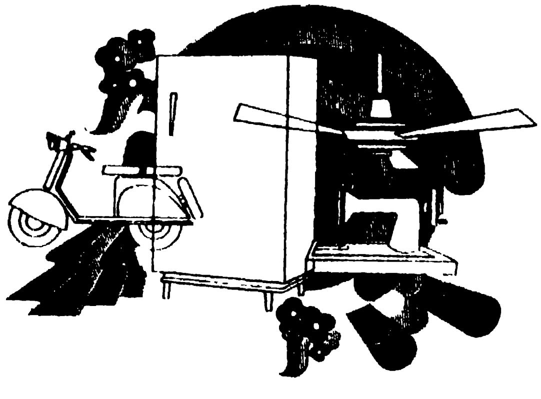

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Indefensible purchase

The left hand not knowing what the right hand does may be a common thing in many government departments, but when the two hands belong to the defence ministry, one has to start worrying. During the Janata regime, the navy purchased helicopter-dropped torpedoes from an Italian firm. The deal was rushed through as the then PM's son, Mr Kanti Desai, the then PM's secretary, the late Mr V. Shanker, and the then naval chief, Admiral S. N. Kohli, showed keen interest in it. These torpedoes were to be used in Sea King helicopters. But before the purchase, it was not tested to see if the Sea Kings could use the Italian torpedoes. So, now the navy has in stock a large number of helicopter-dropped torpedoes it cannot use, because they cannot be loaded on Sea King helicopters. Will the defence audit and Parliament's public account's committee look into this scandal?

Public sector giants remain headless

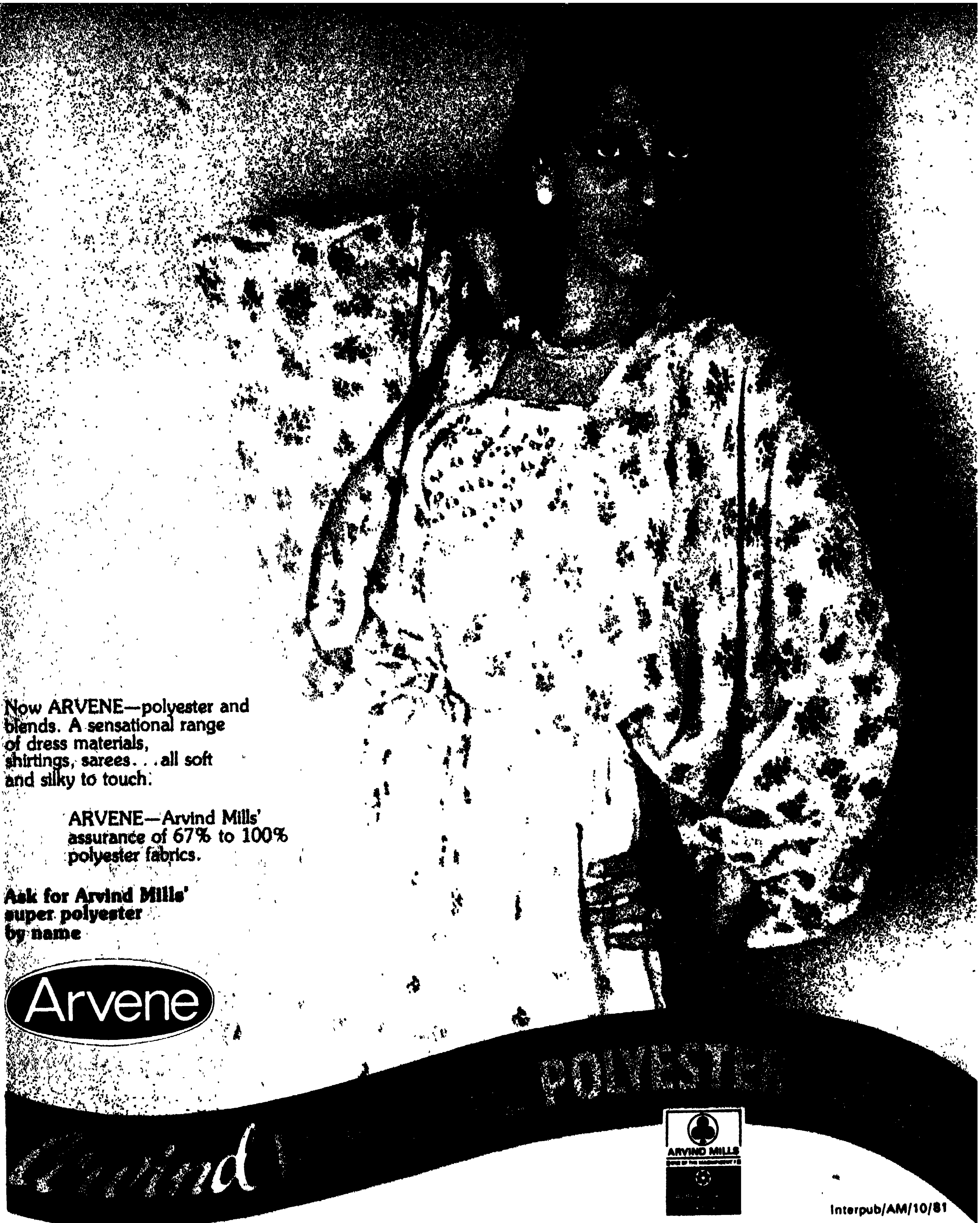
The Food Corporation of India has been without a chairman for over nine months now. A move was recently made to elevate the present managing director, Mr K. V. Seshadri, to that post. While the agriculture minister, Rao Birendra Singh, is favourably disposed towards this, the other higher-ups in the government are against it. Some of them favour Mr B. C. Gangopadhyay, at present secretary in the food department (ministry of agriculture and rural re-construction), who had previously held the post of FCI chairman for a short period till June 1980. He was earlier managing director in the corporation. No one knows when and how the post will be filled up. A chairman is also yet to be appointed for the State Trading Corporation which has been without a top man ever since Dr S. C. Bhattacharjee left on the expiry of his three-year contract in January. The names of Mr B. B. Gujral, additional secretary in the department of revenue, and Mr S. B. Gugnani, additional secretary and financial adviser to the commerce ministry, are being mentioned. But here also the government has not yet made up its mind. Another STC subsidiary, the Projects and Equipment Corporation, has also been without a chairman for quite some time now.

Travails of free trade zone

Export-oriented units in the Kandla free trade zone (KFTZ) are in big trouble. They have been denied the minimum facility of telephone and telex connections. The priority allotment of connections has been withdrawn and the units have been placed under the 'general' category, which means not getting connections in ages. The commerce ministry has taken up the matter with the telephone authorities at various levels, but to no effect so far. Another problem faced by the units is the absence of liner services at Kandla port. When the KFTZ was set up the intention was to utilise the port facilities available at Kandla. Now more than 90 per cent of the foreign trade cargo of the zone is routed through Bombay port. Indian Airlines have also suspended the regular Avro service to Kandla since 1974 when fuel costs shot up. In addition, housing for industrial workers who number 3,500 is posing a problem. The Gujarat government has also not accepted the suggestion of the commerce ministry that industries located in the KFTZ be declared public utilities to prevent strikes and lockouts. The effect of all this will be to nullify the concessions already granted, like the five-year tax holiday, exemption from customs duty on import of capital goods, raw materials and components, and waiving of octroi, excise and state levies on raw materials.

State trading on way out?

The government seems to be moving away from its professed policy of allowing public sector organisations to take up the "commanding heights" of the economy. How else could one explain its sudden decision to de-canalise the import of raw cashew nuts and place it under open general licence. This comes close on the heels of the decision to de-canalise the import of copper and brass scrap. The only remaining condition is that 50 per cent of the quantity contracted for by actual users, export houses and trading houses will have to be offered to the Cashew Corporation of India (canalising agency for the import of raw nuts) for distribution to processing units. The decision comes in the wake of pressure from the Cashew Export Promotion Council which passed a resolution in October 1980 demanding decanalisation. The government is justifying its action on the ground that despite canalisation and further modifications made in the policy in the last two years, it has not been possible to secure adequate quantities from traditional sources like East Africa. But this argument is specious because the traditional sources are themselves facing a shortage due to bad crops. They are also trying themselves to set up processing units for export.



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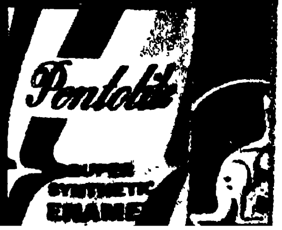

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Pakistan's brave Urdu poets

By Mehru Jaffer

Time was when Urdu poetry was slogan-loaded and highly didactic: that poetry only reflected the needs of its age. Today, for the same reason, the tone of Urdu poetry in the subcontinent has become more contemplative and individualistic. Iqbal's *Sare jahan se achcha Hindustan Hamara* (This India of ours is better than all other lands) and Josh Malihabad's *East India Co. ke farzandon ke naam* (To the sons of East India Company) fulfilled their purpose, of infusing people with patriotism. Once freedom was attained, and even the Muslim dream of a separate state was realised, poets woke up to the fact that reality, after all, was not as glamorous as the dream had been.

The aftermaths of partition engulfed poets in sorrow and disillusionment. The worst affected were, obviously, the *muhajirs* (refugees) who had crossed the border into Pakistan in the name of religion. On reaching Karachi, the city of lights, a *muhajir* poet bemoaned, *Aap ke shahar mein raunak tho bahut hai; Lekin apne ghar ke daro-deewar kahan se laoon* (Your city is full of lights; but how can I call this my own home)? Mustafa Zaidi from Allahabad describes his plight in his new home in the following words, *Pyas aisi ki zuban mooh se nikal ayee hai; Koi kusloom koi darya koi kathra mada de* (The thirst is so great that my tongue hangs out; isn't there a drop to quench my thirst)?

A new wave in Urdu poetry swept the subcontinent in the mid 1950's when the existential verses of poets like Akhtar-ul-Iman in India and Nasir Kazmi in Pakistan became extremely popular. The poet realised that during the freedom struggle he had played a subservient role to the poltician. It was his turn now to assert himself and talk of his individuality. The poetry he wrote was highly subjective and contemplative. His poetry of the interior landscape talked of psychological problems and questioned individual restlessness. Writes Kazmi, *Hum jaagein, taron se karein baatein; Dukhia aankhein dhoondh raheen vohi pyar ki dhatein* (I keep awake, and talk to the stars; burdened eyes are searching for a familiar love).

The sons of the soil could afford to indulge in a little romanticism, even as turmoil surrounded them, with Faraz Ahmad, the popular lyric writer from Punjab, saying, *Ab ke hum bichde tho shayad kabbi khwabon mein miley; Jis tarah sookhe huey phool kitabon mein miley* (This time when we part, then perhaps we shall meet in dreams; just as dry petals are found in forgotten books). But the uprooted *muhajir* poet, concentrated mainly in Karachi, continued his search for identity, and continued to write about his obsession with the idea of exile.

The political circumstances in Pakistan did not allow poets to remain self-indulgent for long. Soon a volcanic burst of verses like Athar Abbas's *Yahan horn bajane ki ijazat nahin* (You are not allowed to blow a horn here), surfaced. While poets like Josh seem outdated in their lifetime, Dr Wazir Agha, Zafar Iqbal and Amjad Islam Amjad took over as stalwarts of a new kind of poetry. Lahore remains a centre where much creative writing is done, but the verses written are so symbolic, so full of metaphor that they go above the heads of most of the Pak poets' countrymen.

That is, apparently, one reason why the present military regime has not touched the poets despite the fact that their poetry is often provocatively hostile to the generals. As long as the message is not understood by the large majority, the fundamentalist government feels quite safe. Says Dr Gopi Chand Narang, head, Urdu department, Jamia Millia, Delhi: "Poetry written in Pakistan today has definite political undertones but only the discerning ear can hear the nuance."

Then again, there is a genuine sympathy for fundamentalism among sections of Pakistanis. This explains why Josh the octogenarian poet, is living in exile in his own country today, without the Pakistanis showing much sympathy for him. Josh is being punished not because he was critical of dictatorship but because he committed the sacrilegious mistake of criticising Islam and a patriotic Muslim like Iqbal.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz does not live in Pakistan anymore; but he has not been banished into exile by the military regime either. The reason why he stays away from Pakistan is because his lifestyle is illegal in Pakistan today. So he has chosen to stay in Beirut instead, after his friend Z. A. Bhutto fell from power. He edits the Afro-Asian writers' magazine now. "I would have admired him more if Faiz had stayed at home and participated in the struggle to make the country a better place to live in," says a young poet who is still in Pakistan.

Many look with disdain at the aristocrat-like lifestyle which Faiz follows, but few deny that he is the only poet in the subcontinent who has held the fort for three decades. His verses are as powerful today as they were when Faiz was a practising revolutionary. When he was jailed and nearly hanged in connection with the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case in the 1950's, Faiz wrote from behind the bars, *Matai laho kalam chhin gayi tho kya gham hai, ke khoon-e-dil mein duba lee hain unglian; Labon pe mohrein lagi hain tho kya, ke rakh dee hain har ek halkaye zanjeer mein zuban main ne.* Today Faiz may look like a dandy, but his spirit remains that of an incorrigible progressive. Only recently he wrote, *Jab taj uchale jaenge, jab takht giraye jaenge, jab ahle safa mardoode haram masnath pe bithaye jaenge* (When crowns will be thrown into the air, when thrones will be smashed; when common man and the oppressed will be seated on the chairs of power).

The distinguishing feature of Faiz's poetry is its variety. His verses are multi-dimensional and communicate at different levels. The following verse is highly subjective but political at the same time, *Hai us shokh ke ahista se khulte-hue honth , apna maunzoon-e sukhan inke siva aur nahin.* Faiz is at his romantic best when he says, *Gulon mein rang bhare badenau bahar chale; Chale bhi aao ki gulshan ka karobar chale.*

An interesting development in modern Urdu poetry is the seriousness of thought in verses written by women. Fehmida Riaz rose to fame as a spokesman of feminine sensibilities. Earlier female poets had used the masculine gender in their writing: for the first time in the existence of Urdu poetry the feelings of a housewife, a mother and a mother-to-be are written about from their point of view by Fehmida Riaz. Kishwar Nahid is a delightful satirist while the verses of Parveen

Shakir and Zohra Nigah are of a very high intellectual calibre.

An example of a protest poet is Iqbal Sajid whose verses are subtle and well clad in euphemism. Writes Sajid,"*Is amal ne to kahin ka bhi na rakha doston; Khudparasti ki hamein khwahish bahut mahngi padi* (This system has left us nowhere; we are having to pay a heavy price for narcissism).

Says Shakil Jalali in similar tones, *Rahte hain kutch malool se chehre pados mein, Itna na tez keejiye dholak ki dhap ko* (There are some sad faces in the neighbourhood; do not raise so high the sound of the drum). Habib Jalib who is one of the most angry poets in Pakistan today even names Zia, which means light, in his poetry, *Zulmath ko zia, sarsar ko saba, bande ko khuda kya likhein* (Why should I call darkness light, a storm a fresh breeze, a man a god)?

Yet another example of fearlessness is the late Ibne Insha's verse, written about two years ago, *Inshaji ab kooch karo, is shahar mein dil ka lagana kya; Vehshee ko sukon se kya mathlab, jogi ka nagar mein thikana kya* (Insha, let us leave this place; one is not feeling happy in this city any more; like the savage who is not concerned with peace and the yogi who has no place in civilisation).

One reason why the quality of modern Urdu poetry of Pakistan is superior to Urdu poetry written in recent years in India is political repression; the power of verse is becoming one of the most important weapons in this fight. Paradoxically, the comparative stability in India has turned progressive writers into pedants. Poetry in Pakistan is thriving thanks to the circumstances, which are described by poets themselves as "contradictory and disastrous."

'I write about the plight of the oppressed'

The man who is described as the conscience of modern Pakistan is short-statured, dark-complexioned and has hollow cheeks. At first glance, Iqbal Sajid (42) seems to be a man of few words but once pricked into talking about poetry he is like a volcano that spontaneously erupts. But, on the subject of politics, and political poetry, Sajid once again becomes tight-lipped. "I am a literary person and not a politician," says the poet who has received formal education only till class ten. Born in a village in Saharanpur, UP, half his family migrated to Pakistan after partition. Sajid is in India these days meeting relatives who are scattered all over Bijnor, Saharanpur, Meerut, Bombay and Delhi. Excerpts from an interview with the poet:

Q: How did you become a poet?

A: I am a poet by birth. I don't know of any other member of my family who is a poet. My family profession is stone-quarries.

Q: When did you start writing?

A: When the sub-continent was echoing with the inspiring verses of poets like Nazir Kazmi, Muzaffar Iqbal and Shahzad Ahmad. The period was the mid-1950's.

Q: Do you have a profession, besides writing poetry?

A: *Alfazon ki kheti badi ke siva aur kutchh nahin karta hoon* (Besides cultivating words, I do nothing else).

Q: Do you earn enough to be able to support a wife and six children?

A: Sometimes I earn enough, sometimes not enough and sometimes a little more than enough.

Q: Do any of your children want to become a poet?

A: My eldest daughter who is 11 years old is very good in Urdu. But I don't want her to become a poet.

Q: Why?

A: Why should she? Look at me. I have reduced myself to nothing but a poet.

Q: But isn't that great, to be just a poet?

A: I don't know. I can't forget the hardships I have to go through. The sacrifices that I am called to make all the time. I don't want another generation to go through all this, all over again.

Q: What sort of hardships do you have to go through apart from the financial ones?

A: Yes, financial hardships. But the struggle to be accepted as a poet was very difficult. There are so many self-styled custodians of literature who have the power to reject honest poetry if it does not follow their respective 'isms.'

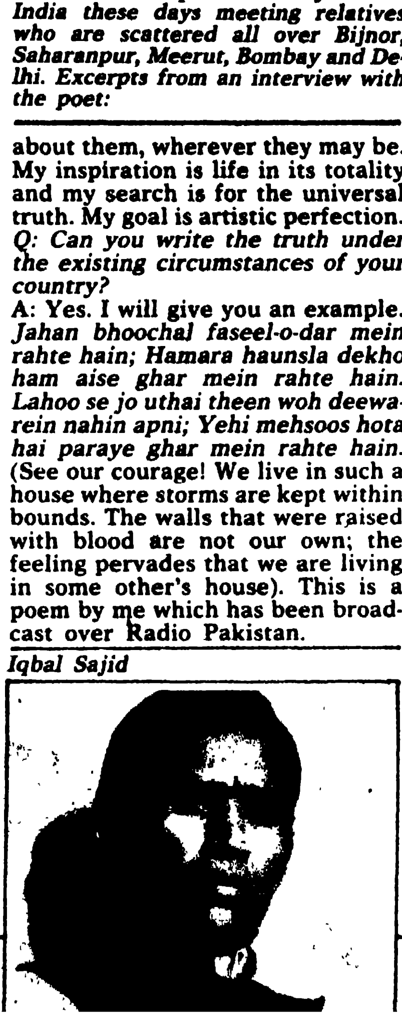
Q: What role did the political situation in your country play in inspiring you to write?

A: That poetry which is only political is not my cup of tea. The plight of the oppressed inspires me to write about them, wherever they may be. My inspiration is life in its totality and my search is for the universal truth. My goal is artistic perfection.

Q: Can you write the truth under the existing circumstances of your country?

A: Yes. I will give you an example. *Jahan bhoochal faseel-o-dar mein rahte hain; Hamara haunsla dekho ham aise ghar mein rahte hain. Lahoo se jo uthai theen woh deewarein nahin apni; Yehi mehsoos hota hai paraye ghar mein rahte hain.* (See our courage! We live in such a house where storms are kept within bounds. The walls that were raised with blood are not our own; the feeling pervades that we are living in some other's house). This is a poem by me which has been broadcast over Radio Pakistan.

Iqbal Sajid



Q: How do you reach the masses?

A: I just told you my verses are broadcast, telecast and published in newspapers and magazines all the time. My *ghazals* are sung by vocalists like Farida Khannum and Ghulam Ali.

Q: Is it because your poetry is so symbolic, so intellectual and is not understood by the masses that you have free access to the media?

A: I don't know.

Q: Do you feel safe as a poet in Pakistan?

A: Very safe.

Q: Has any one of your colleagues been victimised for writing the truth?

A: I don't know. You ask too many political questions. I am a poet and not a political leader. Talk to me about literature and not politics.

Q: Is there any censorship on poets in Pakistan?

A: There is censorship on poets who crudely, and in very direct terms criticise individuals or institutions. Direct verse is not poetry anyway.

Q: Are you against this sort of censorship?

A: Yes, I am and we also fight to free poets from any kind of censorship.

Q: The undertone of your poetry is so political and anti-establishment. Isn't the military regime wary of it?

A: My poetry is not meant to frighten anyone. But if it does frighten some, I can't do anything about it.

Q: Can you sketch a verbal portrait of the poet in modern Pakistan?

A: He is a man wanting to be heard, a man in search of the universal truth and above all political considerations.

Q: Which poet of India impresses you most?

A: Individuals do not impress me. The environment impresses me. But you have excellent poets like Muzaffar Hanfi, Kumar Pashi, Balraj Komal and Adil Mansoor. There are many others too but these are the names which come to my mind at the moment.

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'Even the Koran is censored'

Fehmida, 35, is a fearless feminist from Pakistan. Twice married, she gave up her architect first husband's cushy home in London to marry Zafar Ujjan, a young and struggling journalist. The couple edits the monthly Urdu magazine Awaaz *published from Karachi, and is committed to the cause of restoring democracy in the country.*

"I don't know whether Fehmida is a feminist, but she is a realist, I know," says Ujjan when asked what it is like being married to a feminist. Fehmida spoke at length to Mehru Jaffer about the frustrations of creative writers who are living in a country under a military dictatorship.

Q: In a conservative society like yours, how are fearless women like you looked upon?

A: The government fears us, relatives are embarrassed by us, and the neighbours feel uncomfortable.

Q: How is the current Islamisation drive affecting your society?

A: There is no Islamisation drive in Pakistan. The present government dreads the true spirit of Islam. What it is trying to do is to introduce a certain Saudi Arabian culture which is largely tribal in nature.

Q: President Zia-ul-Haq is as much a Pakistani as you claim to be. Why would he want to destroy the country with his own hands?

A: Adolf Hitler was also a German, but he destroyed his country. It is all a matter of vested interests taking top priority.

Q: How are women being affected by the new laws enforced in Pakistan in the name of religion?

A: The effect is still to be seen. It is difficult to say what type of human beings young women who are being forced to wrap themselves in *chadars*, will grow up to be, and what sort of complexes they will develop. But all enlightened women have ignored official orders to wear the *chadar*.

Q: Are you a feminist?

A: I am as much of a feminist as James Baldwin and Eldrige Cleaver are negroes. A good deal of poetry I write is about the plight of women. But I also write about the exploitation of men. I am for the combined liberation of ignorant men and women.

Q: You do write political poetry, don't you?

A: Politics cannot be left to politicians alone. Politics affects us in our day to day life. It determines whether my children willl get their next meal or not, whether they will have proper education and a home. Since I write about real experiences of life, politics is included in my writing.

Q: You are also dubbed a poet of dissent.

A: Deep down in my heart I cherish certain values, a dream. I long to see that dream fulfilled. Till then I will fight.

Q: Are you a leftist?

A: Everybody who cares for human happiness is termed a leftist. In that sense, I am a leftist.

Q: What is the reaction of your government to your writing?

A: It is a very long and sad story. Dozens of court cases have been filed against me. But what else did I expect from a fascist government?

Q: What are you accused of?

A: Of sedition.

Q: How free are you in Pakistan to express truth?

A: The permission to speak the truth is not there but I choose to write freely. I am prepared for the consequences. It is only the fear of the repercussions which prevent people from speaking out.

Q: Is there censorship on poets?

A: There is cenorship all around and poets have not been spared either. Even the Koran is censored.

> The choice before me is to die fighting or to live the life of a vegetable.

Q: In what way?

A: Portions which say that tyranny will end one day and that there is eternal hell for tyrants, are censored from the Koran and so are any references to the *dajjal*.

Q: Who is the dajjal*?*

A: He is an evil character who rides a donkey and will arrive as doomsday nears.

Q: Is it because the present regime identifies itself with characters like the dajjal*?*

Fehmida Riaz

A: What else? Even words like murderers, thieves, dacoits and fascists are censored.

Q: Are you victimised for writing the truth?

A: I face constant harassment. Hardly a week passes by without the police standing at my doorstep with a search warrant.

Q: Is it because you are a Bhutto supporter?

A: It is not so simple. It is mainly because whatever you say truthfully goes against the present regime.

Q: Was the tone of your poetry as angry when Bhutto was the Prime Minister?

A: Yes, of course, when I wrote about injustice.

Q: How safe, do you feel in Pakistan today?

A: Not for a minute do I feel safe. In fact anybody can be arrested anytime. We don't even have the freedom to talk in our house. The whole country is bugged and is suffering from a sense of terror and paranoia.

Q: How do the government controlled media treat you?

A: Radio and TV avoid me like the plague and there are columns and columns full of abuse printed against me in newspapers. The choice before me is to die fighting or to live the life of a vegetable.

Q: Since you are so politically alive, tell me what you think the recent hijacking drama in Pakistan proved?

A: It proved that there were more than seven political prisoners in Pakistan. But it was a nerve-shattering experience as the entire country wondered about the fate of those three brave youngsters who risked their lives and defied the ruthless military rulers.

Q: Your concern was more for the hijackers than for the hostages?

A: I knew that the hijackers would not harm the hostages.

Q: But one of the hostages was killed?

A: He was a criminal.

Q: What role are you playing as a poet to bring about democracy in your country?

A: I am doing nothing very great, except writing the truth.

Q: What is the exact purpose of your visit to India?

A: Fascism, once it raises its head, is not confined to the region of its birth. The neighbouring regions are also affected. I am here to mobilise world opinion against the military regime. This is something we owe to our people, to tell the world what they are going through. I am certainly not here to attend dinners and tea parties, or to do shopping. There is plenty of that sort of activity in my own country. ■

THE CENSUS STORY

ANIL SAARI finds out what the 1981 national census contains

IT cost 71 paise per head to count the 330,462,802 women and the 353,347,249 men that make up the Indian population of 683,810,051, according to the Provisional Population Totals issued by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, on 18 March 1981. The census commissioner, Mr P. Padmanabha, concedes that the figures provisionally issued by them cannot be taken to be an absolute truth but he also claims, "The Indian census is one of the closest to the real figure because we do not make any inquiries by mail, as is done in the USA. Our method ensures the maximum results."

From 9 February to 28 February 1981, an army of one-and-a-quarter million enumerators went from house to house asking, among other things, how many languages a person spoke, what kind of a job one worked at during the last year, how much one had studied, the gods one believed in and whether one was a member of a scheduled caste or tribe, etc. No other caste list was made except for the scheduled castes and tribes because the official opinion, as expressed by the census commissioner, is that "in today's situation it is undesirable from the viewpoint of the larger context to enumerate caste. All we would do would be to strengthen certain lobbies." Castes have not been enumerated in India since the 1931 census. In 1941 an attempt was made to list the backward classes but Indian census officials found that it was not so easy to define the backward classes.

There are, however, several new categorisations attempted by the 1981 national census. An attempt has been made to count the number of houses in the country; the number of enterprises; the blue-and white-collar workers; those attending schools or colleges; those seeking or available for work and those who are blind, crippled or dumb. More, a 20% sample of the total enumeration blocks in the country were selected for systematic sampling in questions relating to migration and fertility. The household schedule was revived and it sought details regarding housing conditions and elementary information about water supply; electricity; the material used for walls, roofs and floors; toilet facilities (in urban areas); number of living rooms; number of married couples usually living in the household and whether the house is rented or not.

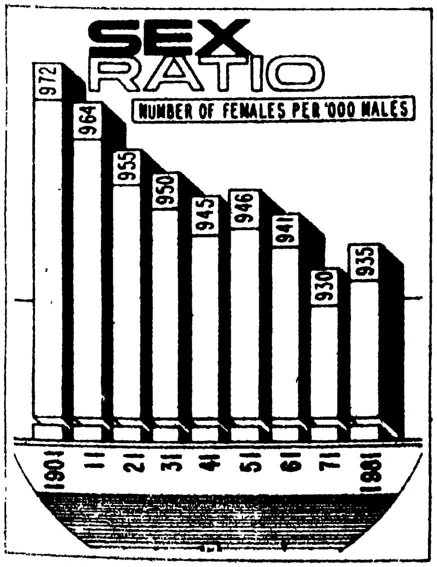
The ninth Indian census (the first was in 1901) provides, in comparison to the 1971 census, a marginal improvement in the sex ratio of the Indian population. In 1981 the general sex ratio was 935 women for 1,000 men. There were only 930 in the 1971 census. The sex ratio, however, has been gradually becoming more and more disproportionate as the decades go by, despite two marginal reversals of this downward trend in 1951 and 1981. At the beginning of this century, in 1901, 972 women were counted for every thousand males. The Provisional Population Totals show that Kerala is the only Indian state where women outnumber men. The state's provisional sex ratio is 1,034 women for 1,000 men. Other states, where the sex ratio is not too lopsided are: Himachal Pradesh (988 to 1,000), Pondicherry (985), Orissa (982), Goa, Daman and

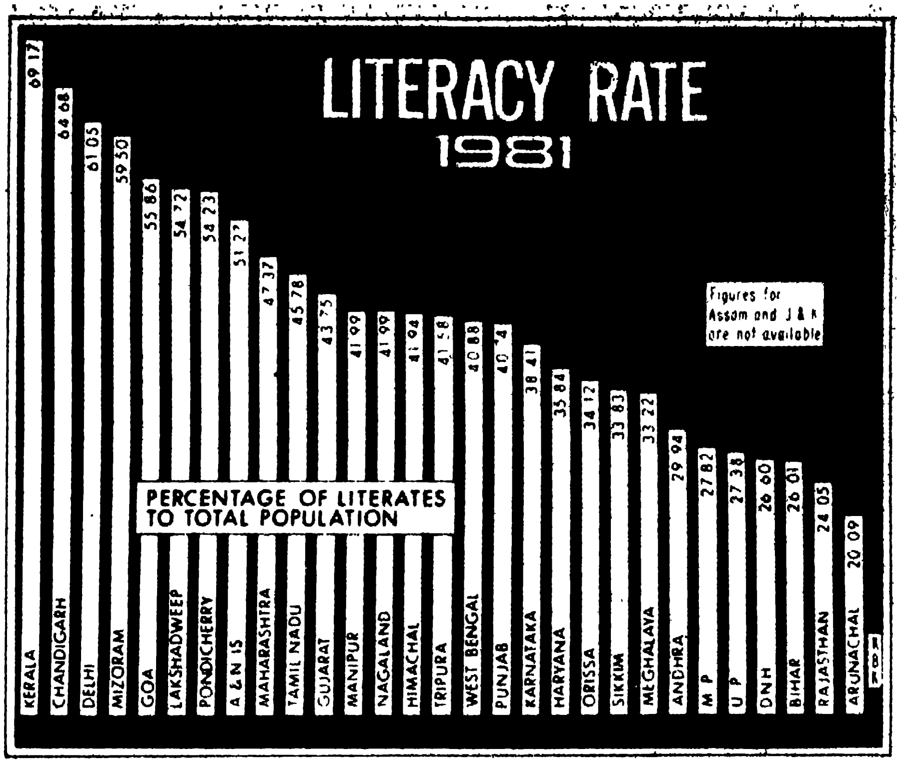
Census commissioner filling in Mrs Gandhi's enumeration forms

Diu (981), Tamil Nadu (978), Lakshadweep (976) and Andhra Pradesh (975).

Chandigarh with 770 women per 1,000 men and Delhi with 810 women are at the bottom of the sex ratio list. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands which has the most disproportionate ratio with 761 women per 1,000 men follow closely. Sikkim, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh also have a sex ratio of less than 900 women per 1,000 men. Comparatively better among the north-eastern states are Manipur (972), Meghalaya (956) and Mizoram (936). Northern India, notorious for cities and towns where eve-teasing is rampant, suffers from a chronic disproportion. Following Chandigarh and Delhi, Haryana is seventh from the bottom of the list with 877 women per 1,000 men. Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are next with 886 women per 1,000 men. Rajasthan has 921, Madhya Pradesh, 941 and Bihar, 947 women per 1,000 men. West Bengal has a sex ratio of 911 women to 1,000 men and the troubled state of Assam has only 900 women for every 1,000 men. Maharashtra is in the bottom half of the list having only 939 women to 1,000 men. Indian census officials are not clear about the steady decline in the sex ratio. The official explanations offered are that there is a preference for male children resulting in the neglect of female babies, that certain types of mortality are selective between males and females and that some part of the adverse sex ratio may be attributed to the high maternal mortality.

Sex ratio above 1,000 are to be found only in highly localised pockets—the districts in the coastal belt of Kerala, the Dakshin Kannad district of Karnataka, the Ratnagiri and Satara belt of Maharashtra and the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh with a small pocket in the Kangra area of Himachal Pradesh. These are areas where the men traditionally move out in search of employment. In the rest of the country the sex ratio is rather evenly distributed in the range of 900 to 1,000, with the exception of western UP and northern Madhya Pradesh where it falls to 850 women to 1000 men, while the all-India average is 935 women to 1,000 men.

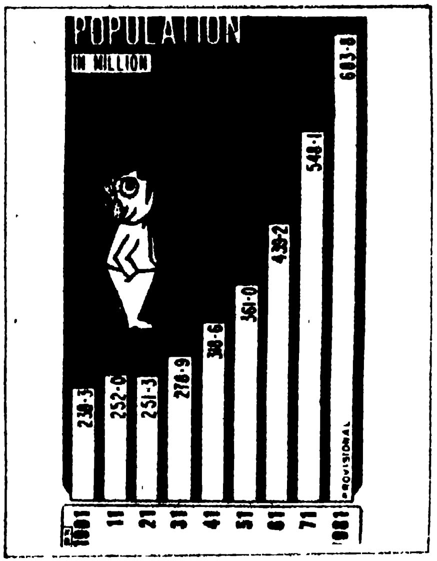




Indian feminists may, however, derive some satisfaction from the fact that "the percentage increase in female literacy in this decade (1971-1981) is high in comparative terms in those states that do not occupy high position in the scale." Till 1920, female literacy was considerably lower than male literacy and the ratio in favour of males was 1:10. However, there was an improvement in the later years. The 1971 census showed that for every 100 literate women there were approximately twice as many literate males. In 1981, the provisional results indicate that for every 100 literate women, there would be 201 literate males in India.(For census purposes, a literate person is only one who can both read and write and children below five years of age are treated as illiterate.) The provisional count indicates that over the last decade an additional 48 million people are illiterate.

Kerala continues to be the most literate state in the country with a literacy rate of 69.17%. Among men the figure is higher—74.03%. Chandigarh (64.68%) and Delhi (61.06%) are other areas with a literacy rate over 60%. Mizoram, Goa, Daman and Diu, Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands are the other places which can boast of a rate of over 50%; in sharp contrast to the Hindi-belt states of Rajasthan (24.05%) and Bihar (26.01%). UP (27.38%) and Madhya Pradesh (27.82%) are only slightly better. The lowest literacy rate is in Arunachal Pradesh—20.09%. Even heavily industrialised states like Maharashtra (47.37%), West Bengal (40.88%), Gujarat (43.75%) and Tamil Nadu (45.78%) do not have a literacy rate of 50%.

Although Delhi has a high literacy rate, it is one of the most over-crowded places in the country—4,178 people per sq.km. and Chandigarh (3,948). However both these union territories are urban areas. The average density rate for the country works out to 221 persons per sq. km. Kerala has 654 persons and West Bengal, 614. The two states top the list among the states. The states which have more people above the all-India level are Bihar, Haryana, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry. The lowest number of people is in Arunachal Pradesh which has only seven persons per sq. km.

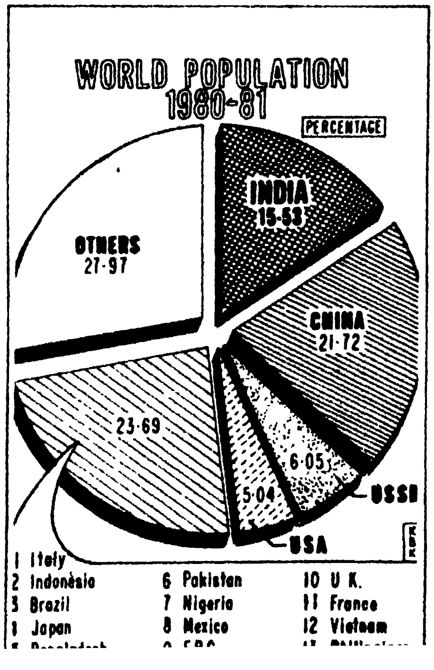


The enumerators' problems

The biggest problem faced by the census people was, perhaps, the enumeration of the affluent urban pockets. This was not a problem in the remote, obscure villages, explained census commissioner, Mr P. Padmanabha, to this correspondent. People in the bigger towns and cities, especially those well-off, do not have the time to answer the fairly detailed questionnaires; many of them are suspicious that the information may be used by other government departments, mainly those dealing with income tax and house tax; and in the cases of the "upper-upper class" many citizens leave it to their private secretaries and their domestic servants to answer the enumerator's inquiries. This makes the census department's task difficult enough. Gone are the days, says Mr Padmanabha, when the District Collector could order all the dogs of a locality to be chained and the lamps to be lit in all houses to help the enumerators. The commissioner also spoke of Iraq where curfew was imposed all over the country to enable the census count to take place smoothly. "If I did such a thing," said the commissioner jocularly, "I would have a riot on my hands!"

The census could not be carried out because of the troubled situation in Assam. The census officials were, however, lucky that the Gujarat agitation was lifted before the expiry of the census dates. Nevertheless, to make things easier the census commissioner extended the period in Gujarat by three days. While working in Gujarat, enumerators were worried about their safety. The census commissioner asked the authorities not to give curfew passes to the enumerators. He had a reason. He felt if even one enumerator had been injured during the curfew it would have demoralised the entire force.

UP, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Nagaland were some of the other states that caused problems for the census officials. Houselisting and training of enumerators in Tripura, originally scheduled for June-September 1980, was postponed because of the bloody conflicts in the state. The truck-drivers' strike in Calcutta last year froze communications for a short period between the regional census offices in the north-east and the headquarters at New Delhi. In UP, houselisting was undertaken in 1980 under considerable pressure, as enumerators at Moradabad, and other places of tension, were reluctant to go into certain areas. The problems of today's census force are no less than those of the past. In 1901, there is the colourful instance of a census director in the Central Provinces who reported that a tiger had jumped on the bonnet of his car and refused to get off.



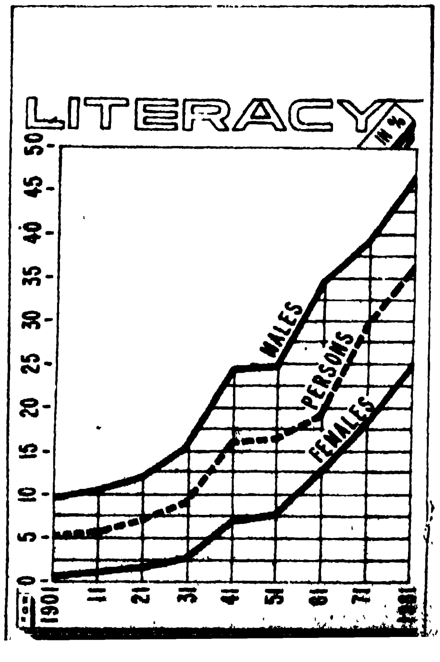
In the superficially civilized cities of our land, the census authorities were rather reluctant to appoint lady enumerators. There was the added problem of male enumerators who could not always be assigned to areas close to their residences. In the metropolitan cities, where both husbands and wives were earning members, the enumerators often had to visit the houses twice or thrice.

In the smaller towns and rural areas, on the other hand, there was a considerable amount of enthusiasm once the census operations began. In the rural areas, the tribal areas and far-flung places on the Indian border along the Himalayas or in the desert wastes of Gujarat and Rajasthan, it was easier to count people. Primarily because in 100% of the cases the local school teachers were employed as enumerators. The Indian school teacher, said Mr P. Padmanabha, is still highly respected in many rural areas. This has led him to the belief that even the dacoits of Madhya Pradesh have been included in the population totals.

There have been complaints from Indians who have been missed by the enumerators but very few of these complaints have been registered with the census officials. In many cases people living in the metropolitan cities have been left out because enumerators have done the job reluctantly, though they were supposed to check at least once or twice if they foud a house locked. For the 50-odd complaints received from all over the country by the office of the census commissioner, special teams were immediately sent to ensure that the missing names were enrolled. There have also been other obstacles for the census people. For instance, at Delhi a bureaucrat, in the Delhi Municipal Corporation decided to start a survey of tenancy simultaneously with the census count. As a result a number of bachelors living in rented rooms in the capital were omitted, thanks to landlords who do not show the rents they receive in their income-tax and house-tax returns. Though the census commissioner forced the Delhi Municipal Corporation to call off its survey of tenancy almost as soon as it was started, a number of people were missed out in the census. Politicians added to the problem of recruiting the enumerators who were entrusted with the population count. According to informed sources in the registrar-general of India's office, there have been cases in many states where chief ministers intervened to prevent government employees from being appointed for the census.

A section of the population might have slipped through the census count for they were, probably, moving about during the census. This is especially true of those bachelors working on jobs which require touring. On the other hand, foreign tourists who stayed in India between 9 February and 5 March 1981 in one place, have helped to swell the numbers.

A massive drive across the subcontinent was undertaken on the night of 28 February when enumerators listed the country's houseless people those living on the pavement; or in parks; in unused sewer pipes; railway platforms or in the shelters provided by road and rail bridges. In the smaller cities and towns, all cinema houses in the country were told to cancel their nightshows so that these houseless people would not be left out Liquor shops were also closed for the day. The count for the houseless population was conducted simultaneously throughout the country from 10 pm on 28 February to 5 am on 1 March. Even then there were a few problems The census commissioner himself, for example, was threatened when he disturbed the sleep of a pavement-dweller in the early hours of the day in Delhi's Jama Masjid area.



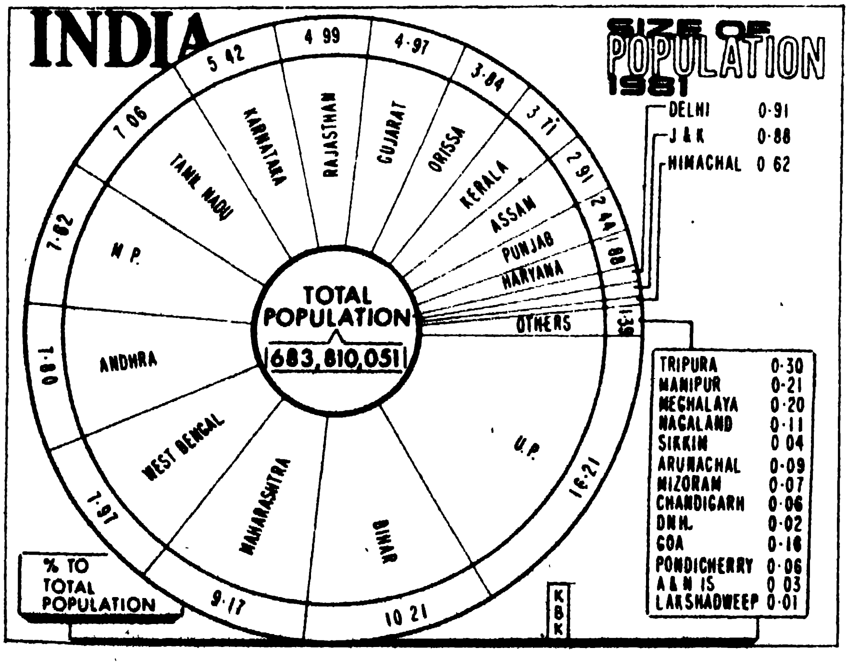
The census army

The national census of 1981 has the distinction of, perhaps, being the only time-bound programme in the country that the central and state governments actually accomplished without requiring any extensions. While Ladakh and the northern-most areas in UP and Himachal Pradesh had been enumerated in September-October 1980, Assam had been left out when the census count began all over the country on 9 February 1981. After the count was over on 28 February (with the exception of Gujarat where it had been extended for three days) the census force went on a revisional round from 1 to 5 March 1981. The results came in on the night of 5 March to the New Delhi headquarters. Then began an intensive phase of cross-checking which was undertaken on 10-11 March. On 18 March the Provisional Population Totals were printed.

The Indian census operation is the single, largest administrative operation ever undertaken in the world. But the record will soon be broken in June 1982 when China holds its first population census after their last one in 1959. India's population of 684 million is 15.53% of the total world population which was estimated to be 3,721 million (excluding India) in 1980. China with its population of 957 million corners 21.71% of the world population while the USSR with 267 million (6.05% of the world population) and the USA with 222 million (5.04% of the world population) comes next. These four countries contain nearly half the population on earth.

To count the 684 million people of India, one-and-a-quarter million enumerators and 27,000 people in the central and regional census offices were required. There were 135 regional offices along with 15 additional stations for the computerised Direct Entry System which were established since the first rounds of houselisting began in 1980. This year's census (upto the end of the financial year 1981-82) required Rs 49 crores and an additional sum of Rs 10 crores are likely to be spent before the final reports come out. The cost worked out at 71 paise per head for the Indian census operation is a lot cheaper than the last census in the USA, which cost about four dollars per head.

Thirty directors of census operations were appointed in the 22 states and eight Union Territories. Leaving aside four of them, all were I.A.S. officers and almost all of them were young in age. According to Mr V. P. Pande, a senior official at the headquarters, "Most of the best-work even at the central office was done by young I.A.S. officers who came to Delhi, forsaking their *shaan* (pride) since most of them are district magistrates and lived in Delhi on an extra allowance of Rs 300 a month. They came because they felt that this was a national task and they only wanted to get the work done." Outside Delhi, too, the dedication of the officers and the others was quite exceptional. In Himachal Pradesh, the director of census operations, K. L. Negi, walked 35 kilometres over a glacier to reach villages in Panji Tehsil which remains snowbound for nine months of the year and cannot be reached even on a pony. Trekkers had to carry their own bags, emergency rations and, in the case of the census party, also a heavy load of census schedules.



At the same time there were many people who were totally unmoved by the time-bound programme and of the total number of men working at the New Delhi headquarters. Only about 50 out of a staff of 1,000 were actually involved in the real sense. This small group started their day at seven in the morning and stopped work around midnight. Nearly 6,000 metric tonnes of paper—which would be enough to spread to the moon and back—had to be taken charge off from the ports of entry (4,000 metric tonnes were imported), cut and printed into census slips and then trucked to each *tehsildar* in the country. At New Delhi, one of the most difficult things, said M. L. Gulati who was in charge of purchase and distribution of materials, was that most of the people working at the operations camp found it difficult to make out the schedules in the different languages, specially the south Indian languages. The issue was further complicated because slips in more than one language had to be sent to many of the states. Looking at their unique accomplishment, practically all the concerned officials at Delhi still find it difficult to believe that they were able to stick to their timetable.

The legions who stalked the country as census enumerators, the ones who, according to the census commissioner, did a magnificient job for only a token sum of money. Each enumerator was paid Rs 70 to count the population in each block and on an average an enumerator went to about 600 to 700 people. Rs 20 was paid for houselisting, Rs 15 for enterprise listing and another Rs 20 was paid to those who worked on the selective sample tabulations of social migration and fertility. Though the money paid was totally disproportionate to the work done by the enumerators, the administration in the different states and union territories tried to compensate the enumerators by giving them leave. In some cases the census enthused the enumerators considerably. In Madhya Pradesh and Kerala some enumerators composed and sang songs defining the different questions. At Alwar, Rajasthan, the census staff rendered the census drive into a play in which an enumerator goes into a house and asks the wrong questions and is corrected by another who puts the questionnaire in order.

GOOD NEWS

Encyclopaedia in Hindi

A Hindi encyclopaedia on world literature—the first of its kind—is being prepared by the Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, in Varanasi. The first volume of the encyclopaedia, which will consist of five volumes, is scheduled to be published by the end of this year. It will take three years to bring out all the volumes. The volumes will chronicle literary events, contain book references and introductions to well-known authors.

New diagnosis for meningitis

The paediatrics department of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences has achieved a breakthrough in the diagnosis of meningitis, a disease of the brain and its covering layers. According to Dr Veena Kalra, assistant professor of the paediatrics department, the new method, known as the "counter current immuno electrophoresis" is revolutionary as it would help diagnose meningitis in about 45 minutes as compared to the 48 hours it took previously.

Bio-gas from cotton wastes

The Cotton Technological Research Laboratory has succeeded in producing bio-gas from textile wastes. It has already set up a plant, on an experimental basis, with a capacity to handle 100 kgs of usable fibres from cotton waste. This produces 100 litres of bio-gas daily. At present, textile mills use liquefied petroleum gas for processing cotton, which is not only expensive but is not easily available. But bio-gas, generated from cotton wastes, will be both cheap and useful.

A hope is born

On 11 April, for the first time in two years, a baby was born to the Ongis, one of the few surviving tribes of the stone age, living in the Andamans and now facing extinction. The next day another baby was born to this community. A rare event for the Ongis whose numbers have been declining progressively and now stands at just 105. There are two reasons for the declining population of the Ongis. First, elders of the community enjoy a higher status and marriageable girls always prefer them as husbands. Second, among the roots which form part of the diet of the Ongis, scientists have traced some which positively prevent ovulation.

An Ongi baby

TOOSHAR PANDIT

Projecting a better image

A concerted effort to promote India's image—the land and its people—abroad, through foreign television networks is now under way in Delhi with Doordarshan, the Films Division and the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) entering into a partnership to produce 12-colour TV films. The first of these 12 films is to be made by Satyajit Ray, which will be sponsored exclusively by Doordarshan. For the other films, Doordarshan and the Films Division will together provide for 25 per cent of the costs and the NFDC 50 per cent. The process of selecting Indian filmmakers for these prize assignments is already on and a preliminary list of names has been drawn up. This includes some competent young filmmakers.

Free legal aid for the poor

J. B. Patnaik

The Orissa government has set up a legal aid board, headed by the CM, Mr J. B. Patnaik, to give free legal aid to the poor. Justice C. N. Mishra, a sitting judge of the Orissa High Court will be the executive chairman of the board and Mr Justice P. N. Bhagwati of the Supreme Court will be a member.

Around the world on bicycles

On 1 January, three young men from Karnataka embarked on an ambitious project: to cover 1,10,000 km on bicycles in four years. V. A. Mukunda, P. C. Machaiah and T. Nagaraj gave up their jobs to undertake this project. They intend to cover 130 major cities spread over more than 65 countries. Since the three men started their journey from Mercara, in Coorg district in Karnataka, they have covered more than 4,500 kms. By 1984, they hope to be in California, USA, to witness the Olympics. The bicycles they are using have been specially manufactured and can travel at 50 kmph without the cyclists putting in any extra effort.

THE WORLD

Iran cheated of $56 million

In an unprecedented bid to obtain arms outside government channels for its war with Iraq, Iran has been swindled of $56 million. Explaining the bizarre circumstances under which his government was duped, Iranian minister for executive affairs Behzad Nabavi said that the money was deposited into the Iranian government's Paris account in Bank Melli; it was supposed to have been paid to the Spanish dealers who were party to a clandestine contract, "as soon as the arms were loaded for transportation to Iran." The Iranian charge d'affaires in Paris was responsible for supervising the deal and payment. The Spanish dealers presented false shipping documents to Bank Melli, took payment and disappeared. Mr Nabavi claimed that the Iranian charge d'affaires in Paris has been recalled to Tehran to explain his negligence in the matter and investigations were being conducted in Europe to trace the absconding arms dealers.

No divorce, no stay

Jaswinder and son Manjit

Strange are the immigration laws of Great Britain; and their latest victim is Jaswinder Kaur (22) who, along with three-year-old son Manjit, faces deportation to India on the grounds that her husband, Gian Singh—earlier deported after being convicted for assaulting his son—has paternity rights over his son. "(Jaswinder Kaur) remains the wife of Gian Singh who is the father of her son," adjucator D. Marwick Smith ruled, pointing out that since the couple had not been legally separated, the husband's "right of access to his wife and children remains intact despite his inability to live here." Jaswinder's barrister, Sunil Sagger, made a passionate appeal in which he stated that she had instituted divorce proceedings in December 1979, the result of which was still awaited. Mr Sagger also stated that Jaswinder has lived in Britain for six years during which she has been a full-time employee in a factory in Leeds; her son was born here; and that her husband had threatened her and her son with further violence if they returned to India. The adjucator was not impressed. And even if he had been, the Home Ofice may well have challenged his decision. (In a similar case sometime ago, the Home Office had appealed against an immigration tribunal's decision to grant the right to stay.)

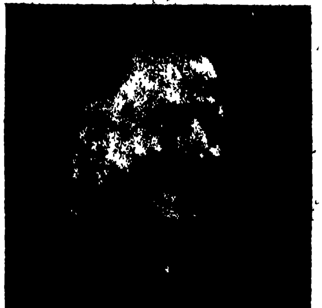
No nude wives

American convicts can decorate their cell walls with nude pin-ups but not with nude photographs of their wives. This was ruled by federal judge Wendell Miles in Michigan recently when he rejected a petition by convict Marion Riddle who claimed that his constitutional rights had been violated when prison authorities did not grant permission to plaster his cell wall with nude photographs of Mrs Riddle. Judge Miles remarked: "The prison policy banning such photographs is understandable...Problems start if someone gets hold of them and remarks are tossed around." However, he added that nude centrefolds and blowups from magazines could be permitted on cell walls as they didn't have any personal implications.

Jews of China

A middle-aged Chinese woman, Jin Xiaojing, in trying to discover her ethnic identity has also discovered the lost Jews of China. Beijing magazine *Encyclopaedic Knowledge* recently carried an article by Miss Jin in which she claimed that in June 1980 she met a Muslim professor who knew two brothers, also surnamed Jin, of Jewish descent. This intrigued her because she was aware that, though a *Hui* (Muslim) by birth, her ancestors originally came from the northern Chinese town of Kaifeng where the largest community of Jews had once lived. The Jin brothers, she later discovered, were in fact her uncles. Miss Jin's 86-year-old mother provided some important clues: her paternal great-grandfather Jin Shide had come to China from Arabia as a merchant; he and his family used to pray differently from the local Muslims; Shide wore a blue cap while the local Muslim preferred the white one. These clues led Miss Jin to Kaifeng where she traced the history of Jews in China. It appears that Jews first came to China between 960 and 1279 AD. Theirs was a thriving community till the western missionaries arrived. By late 19th century, Jews had lost their synagogue and had little knowledge of their religion. Most Jewish families (Miss Jin's included) became identified with local Muslims (who now account for 6.5 million of China's population).

Agnew is "kicked back"


Spiro Agnew

The five-year-old case against former US Vice-President Spiro Agnew on federal charges of receiving $87,000 through a "kick-back" bribe scheme when Governor of Maryland, may soon put him in financial misery. A court in Annapolis has sued Mr Agnew for the equivalent of the amount he allegedly took in bribe plus interest, which adds up to a staggering figure of $200,000!

Soviet "Halo" threat

Codenamed "Halo" by NATO experts, the world's biggest helicopter, Mi-26, has been successfully commissioned by the USSR. Twice as powerful as any existing combat helicopter, Mi-26 has the capacity to carry a company of troops with full gear and equipment, and is roughly as large as a Boeing 727 aircraft. It is an improvement on the previous biggest Russian Mi-6, carries a basic load of 20 tons and is powered by a 25,000 hp engine.

Coca-Cola in China

It has finally arrived; the first bottling plant after 1949 was opened recently near Beijing recently at a cost of £1,000,000. The photograph above shows chairman, board of Coca-Cola, Roberto C. Goizueta trying out the product along with workers at the plant.

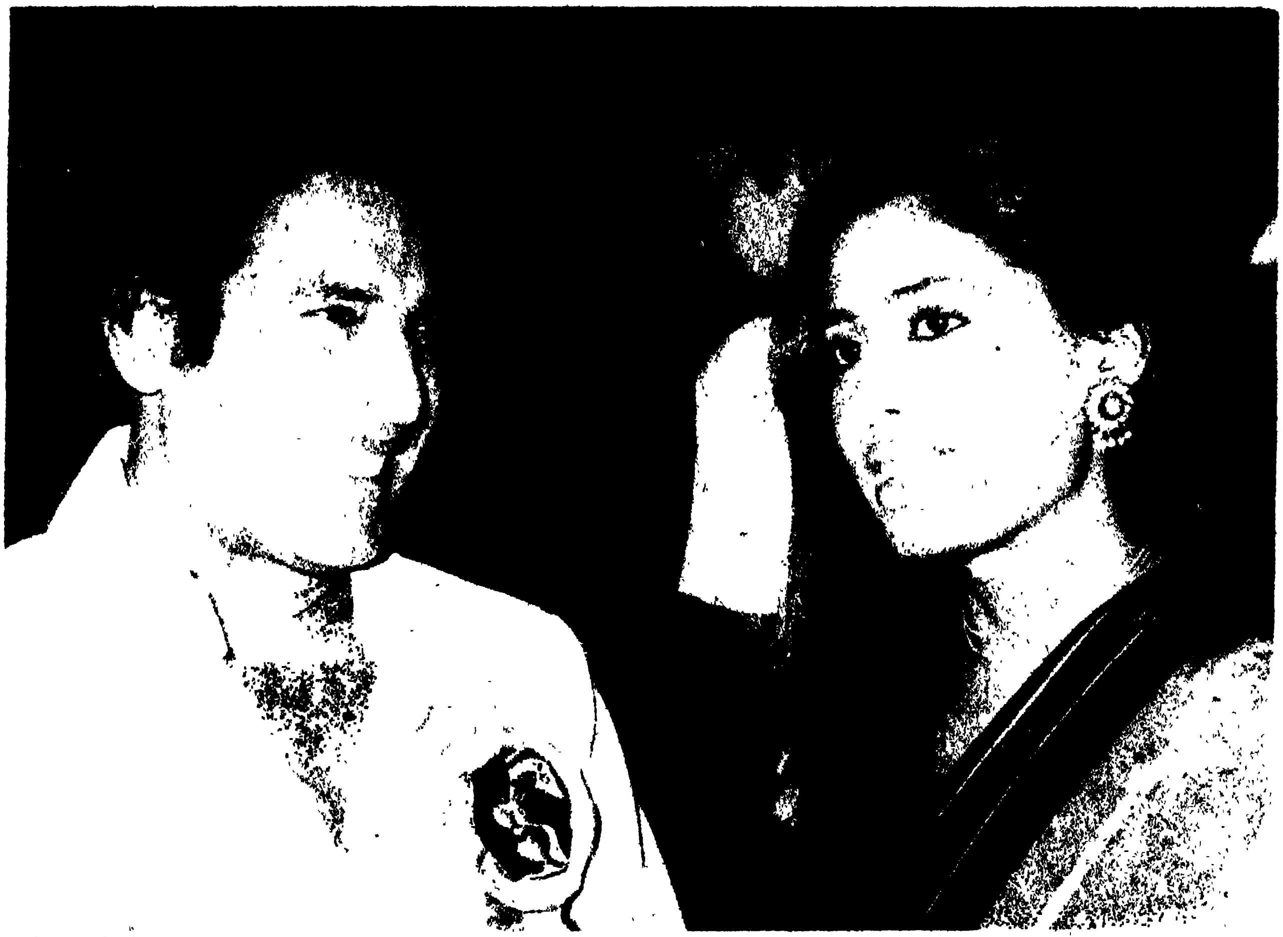
National awards: Shantaram's tamasha

On 23 April, the President of India conferred this year's national film awards. But, who deserved what is the question which very few will not ask after a peep into the events of 26 March to 6 April when a 15-member jury headed by V. Shantaram sat through the screening of the nominated films to give its verdict. We carry an exclusive, behind-the-scene report from our correspondent in Bombay.

A film unit is shooting in a Bengal village. An elderly villager walks up to the director and asks for a role; he claims he nearly played Karl Marx once.

This is no real-life incident; only a sequence from Mrinal Sen's *Akaler Sandhane*, which won the top 28th national film award this year. While this sequence was being viewed by the jury member, Shobhna Samarth—convent-educated, ex-glamour queen of the Hindi screen—asked her interpreter, "Who's Karl Marx?" The man was nonplussed. Did he hear her properly? She repeated the question, this time in a frantic tone. Telugu director K. B. Tilak tried to help: "He is a very well-known writer." Came a cynical voice from somewhere in the darkness: "Just like James Hadley Chase."

Mani Kaul's controversial film *Satthe se uthta aadmi* was being screened. V. Shantaram, heading the 15-member jury, offered his sympathies to the other members soon after the screening was over: "I don't understand why any government should waste its money on abstract films like this one." Since the film had been nominated for best (colour) cinematography, the jury could not help viewing it. But once was not enough. And the second screening was too tedious for the jury members. Couldn't it be stopped? The chairman gladly obliged; but hadn't he said before the screening that "we should not think we are very clever people—we must respect the filmmakers who have entered their films in this competition?" As soon as the lights came up, a



Balan K. Nair and Smita Patil, best actor and best actress, 1980 mini-debate started. Someone commented, "Sir, this is not a feature film, it's a documentary." Snapped Mr Shantaram: "Documentary? It's fake!" "We cannot do this," a single voice raised protest. "The film must be seen, otherwise we'd be insulting its maker." That was Basanta Choudhury jury member from Bengal. He was promptly supported by others: Purnendu Patri, Sunil Gangopadhyay, Mriganka Shekhar Roy and Kerala producer Ravi Nair. Reluctantly the chairman gave the green signal. The show started again.

What happened during the screening of *Aakrosh* and *Geherayee* was that Pune filmmaker Jayoo Patwardhan was found discussing her problems, especially the dispute she had had with script-writer Vijay Tendulkar regarding the rights of a story.

All this happened in the period between 26 March and 6 April at Bombay during the selection of films for the 28th national film awards. The jury was split into three panels. Each panel was asked to recommend three films which had to be viewed by the entire jury and voted upon.

How did V. Shantaram come to lead the jury? Originally, Vasant Sathe wanted veteran Hindi film actor Ashok Kumar to be the chairman; Ashok Kumar did accept the offer but could not make it because of personal reasons. Mr Sathe had to find some other big name and in his list of probables was V. Shantaram. Shantaram was willing on two conditions: the jury must sit in Bombay and not in Delhi as scheduled earlier, and he should have the power of veto. To both these demands Sathe yielded. Thus, for the first time in 28 years, the chairman of the national awards' jury was given the power to overrule even a majority decision. And Shantaram did exercise this power to the hilt. He gave special instructions to jury members which said: "The chairman of the jury for obvious reasons should have the power to accept or amend the recommendations of the jury." The members came to know of this only on 26 April. Surprisingly, the printed regulations prepared by the festival directorate did not say anything on this.

Came 6 April, the last day of the deliberations. At least 11 jurors recommended *Satthe se uthta aadmi* for the special jury award. But Shantaram quoting the rules claimed that the film could not be considered for the award. His interpretation was that the special jury award was meant to appreciate the merit of a film which had failed to bag an award in any of the categories. This was contested by other jurors but disregarding their views Shantaram ruled that the special jury award would be given to a supporting actor. "Name your choice," he told the jurors, handing them over a form where they could record their choice. Only four did: two for Rajen Tarafdar and two for Sreela Majumdar for their performances in *Aakaler Sandhane*. Shantaram felt that any award with such a scant backing was as good as worthless. So he asked them to name a lyricist for the award. Satyajit Ray's name (for *Hirak Rajar Deshe)* came up. But then Shantaram wanted all of Ray's lyrics to be translated into either English or Hindi before the jury could make up its mind about it. Shantaram was indeed asking for the impossible since translating Ray's lyrics meant translating lyrics from other non-Hindi films too. Otherwise, how could the jury judge which was the best among them? Finally, amidst protests (see box) Shantaram ruled: there will be no special jury award this year.

Bengal takes the cake

- **Best feature film:** *Aakaler Sandhane.*
- **Second best feature film:** *Oppol* (Malayalam).
- **Best actor:** Balan K. Nair (*Oppol*).
- **Best Actress:** Smita Patil (*Chakra*).
- **Best director:** Mrinal Sen (*Aakaler Sandhane*).
- **Best screenplay:** Mrinal Sen (*Aakaler Sandhane*).
- ***Best editor:*** *Gangadhar Naskar (Aakaler Sandhane).*
- **Best music director:** Satyajit Ray (*Hirak Rajar Deshe*).
- **Best playback singer:** Anoop Ghoshal (*Hirak Rajar Deshe*).
- **Best first film by a director:** *Moyna Tadanta* (Utpalendu Chakraborti).
- **Best regional language films:** *Hirak Rajar Deshe* (Bengali). *Aakrosh* (Hindi); *Harischendrudu* (Telugu); *Yagam* (Malayalam); *Chann Pardesi* (Punjabi); *Anirban* (Assamese); *Nenjatjai khilladhe* (Tamil).

Mrinal Sen

He also rejected Bharatan's Malayalam film *Lorry*. Winner of a couple of awards in Kerala, the film was recommended for best regional film, best actor, best audiography and best cinematography. "How can people make such vulgar and immoral films? If I was the chairman of the censor board, I would have banned the film," said the chairman. Balan K. Nair, the lead actor in *Lorry* and *Oppol* (for which he bagged the best actor award) received wide applause from the jury, for his brilliant performance. He had even overshadowed Naseeruddin Shah. Yet the chairman could not find anything worthwhile in *Lorry* and threw it out of the competition.

This was not the end. For the next 20 minutes, the jury was treated to a long sermon: how obscene the present day films have become! (Would it be too much to recall some of the titillating scenes in Shantaram's *Geet gaya pattharone* and *Chani?*)

The chairman thought it a sheer waste of time to consider *Geharayee:* the film, according to him, encouraged superstition.

The jury members turned hysterical when the chairman wanted a Tamil social *Nenjatjai khilladhey* to be thrown out. The film was nominated for best regional film, best actress, best colour cinematography, best art direction, best editing and best audiography. Said the chairman: "What's in it? It's a love story. A young girl leaves her house because the sister-in-law is rude to her. Then she marries the wrong person." Again Basanta Choudhury protested: "Mr chairman, is there any film without a love story?" Retorted the chairman: "What social relevance can you find in the film?" The members, one after another, tried to explain the film to him. The reluctant chairman eventually agreed to retain the film in the competition. Suhasini who made her debut in the film got eight votes. Smita got seven for her performance in *Chakra*. Shantaram as the chairman of the jury cast his precious vote in favour of Smita. So it was an eight-eight tie between Smita and Suhasini. Normally, under such circumstances, the chairman refers the matter back to the jury for a review. But as Shantaram is, with his veto power he preferred to cast a second vote to Smita Patil. And that's how Smita Patil won the best actress award. ■

KHAAS BAAT

Hardly has a month passed after their marriage, and *Gayatri* has started throwing tantrums and displaying all other symptoms of a jealous and possessive wife. She picks up stray comments and remarks made by her husband, *Sushil Kumar*, assistant to director and distributor *Prakash Mehra*, exaggerates them beyond proportion and complains to her girlfriends in a tone that says, 'there may be more girls in his life.' One cannot help wondering if Gayatri went through all that trouble of running away from home, eloping with Sushil and finally marrying him, only to begin cribbing about him just a month after their marriage.

DURGAPRASAD

Dharmendra

Dharmendra has joined the march along with *Rajendra Kumar, Dev Anand* and *Sunil Dutt*. The star is bent on launching the career of his son. The script is ready and Dharam himself plans to direct and produce the film. Poor Dharam, he is so taken up with the idea that he never misses a chance to give a scene-by-scene description to every heroine or co-star who can spare some time. We only hope there is no one among his listeners who will pinch the story and sell the idea to a quicker project-maker.

DURGAPRASAD

Sanjeev Kumar

Feroze Khan is unusually quiet these days. Far from indulging in mud-slinging and raising war-cries against *Nazia Hasan*, who snubbed him openly, he has acted the gentleman. And his good manners seem to have paid off. Recently, *Mussarat* of the M3 fame came to India, and who do you think was invited to give away the M3 discs at an award session by Music India? None other than Feroze Khan himself. Well, now that disco music in Hindi has truly become a hit movement, with Feroze Khan leading the way with his music for *Qurbani*, maybe he can ignore a few backbites from a stray Nazia or two. After all, it will be a long time before people will forget that it was Feroze Khan who launched Nazia on her singing career.

Vijayeta and Gaurav: no love lost

VIJAY D THAKKER

Sanjeev Kumar is taking it easy after his recent heart trouble and the subsequent hospitalisation. But, what is the actor doing with all the spare time? Making very good use of it! Sanjeev is working quietly on the film that he has always wanted to make. The grapevine has it that if all goes well, shooting for the film will start sometime this year. Sanjeev is yet to decide on who should be the heroine for his film. Perhaps it is not difficult to guess, but for the moment there are no rumours and everybody is just waiting expectantly.

DURGAPRASAD

Feroze Khan

Granted that he was the first person to ask her to quit New York and go to the Bombay film industry and that she shares the same interests as him, like painting and music; but that does not explain why *Deepti Naval* is wearing the same black, square-rimmed glasses that *Gulzar* is so famous for. If she does need to wear glasses, she could pick a pair that suits her face, and it really need not be of the same shape and size as Gulzar's.

Gaurav, the *Love Story* boy, is turning out to be a success. But the whispered rumours that went on behind the scenes that Gaurav and *Vijayeta* had fallen in love, in between the takes, were not scotched. Suddenly, from the inner circles, female rumbles can be heard about how unsuited the pair were to each other. 'It's all hogwash,' snorted a close relative of the young boy speaking of the romance. All the photographs that were taken for a film mag recently was pure publicity. And the last word came from Gaurav's family: Their darling son did not love Vijayeta at all.

Bhagiyaraj: riding the crest of popularity

Things are looking rather dismal for *Sheela*, the heroine of over 200 Malayalam films. Hard as she might try, she just cannot get back to *Ravichandran*, her one-time husband. Meanwhile, the heroine's businessmen friends seem to have lost interest in her and are spending less and less time with her. For a while, the star dabbled in direction, and even directed a couple of movies starring *Jayan*. Unfortunately, the hero died, and soon it appeared that Sheela was losing interest in direction. Her popularity as a heroine, however, is hardly on the wane. Her old hits run to full houses in the morning shows.

Sukumaran

A*door Gopalakrishna*, the director from Kerala, is having problems starting his new film. The director wants *Sarada* to be the heroine—the actress who won the Urvashi award on two occasions—but only on condition that the actress lose some weight. Of late, Sarada has not been particularly active. *Zabardast*, in which she was co-starring with *Dileep Kumar*, has been shelved; and her Telugu films have flopped. The star, without much to do, has put on weight, and so director Gopalakrishna now wants her to reduce. Well, now that work is here at last, hope Sarada will get into shape soon and start work on the new film.

P*oornima Jayaram* has made it big in the Kerala film industry. Not only has her first Malayalam film been a big hit, but she has also been declared the best actress of the year by the Kerala government. For Poornima, this is indeed a big break especially after her two years in Bombay, where her luck did not turn at all. True, *Mrs Jaya Chakravarthy* offered to take Poornima under her wings during those days, but lady luck was rather loathe to smile on Poornima. Now that she is back in Kerala, she seems to have found a foothold, and a very strong one at that.

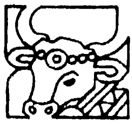
Jayapradha: a famous name

When *Bhagiyaraj*—assistant to director *Bharatiraja*—walked out on his mentor, few thought that he would be able to make it big all on his own. Their hunch was correct the first time: Bhagiyaraj's first film in which he played the lead, did not do too well. But fortunes changed thereafter. Three of his films clicked. In fact, *Mauna Geethangal* became quite a hit. Bhagiyaraj is now a well-known actor and director. But he is not swept away by all the fame. He wants to be choosy "I have not lost the love for off beat films," says the actor director. This explains his presence in *Theneer*—directed by the young writer *Jayabharathi*—and probably accounts for the team of distributors who are interested in the film.

Actor *Vijayan* wants to make a comeback to Malayalam films, the industry he started his career with. Unfortunately, he did not make it big in the Malayalam movies and so decided to try his hand at Tamil films. His first Tamil film *Uthiripookal* created quite a sensation. But since then, Vijayan has been in the dog house. Evidently, the actor has not lost hopes in the Malayalam [illegible] industry to which [illegible] return now.

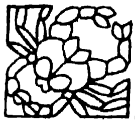
Beginning 17 May

ARIES (15 April—14 May) You are advised to check extravagance. Otherwise, you may have to face problems in the future. Generally, this week is excellent for you. You will enjoy a happy domestic life. Letters will bring good tidings. A new friend will provide you with all the encouragement you need to start a new venture. The time is not particularly favourable for romance **Good dates:** 19, 20 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) You may have to go through a lot of hardships. Your patience, and courage will see you through this period. Exercise caution in all your dealings. You may have to undertake a long journey. Devote more time to your business affairs. The domestic front will be calm and be a source of happiness to you. Social engagements will keep you busy this week. **Good dates:** 17, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North-west.

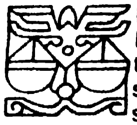
GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is the ideal time to start a new venture. Do not hesitate to adopt fresh business methods. Members of the opposite sex will help you in unexpected ways. You are advised to exercise caution in matters related to heart. You need a long rest to regain your physical and mental vitality. Do not indulge in gambling. You may have to go on a short journey. **Good dates:** 17, 19 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South.



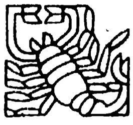
CANCER (15 July—14 August) Your activities will surprise people around you. What you need now is good planning to prosper. Some of you will gain through sports, speculation and gambling. The domestic front will be calm. You may go on a picnic. Some of you may have to part with your properties. Your financial condition will not be all that satisfactory. You may have to borrow money. **Good dates:** 17, 20 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 6 and 8. **Favourable directions:** West and north-west.

LEO (15 August—14 September) This will prove to be a very lucky week for those of you who are in service. Promotions are likely. The time is favourable for romance. Some of you may even get married during this period, or in near future. You are advised to guard against deception. Do not be overoptimistic. You should make utmost of the present situation to consolidate your position. **Good dates:** 18, 20 and 21. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North.

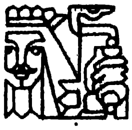
VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This week mixed fortunes are in store for you. You may have to face setbacks but do not get upset. Guard against your bohemian dispositions. You are advised to guard against deception. Do not make any changes during this period. Avoid being rude to others. You may become friendly with a member of the opposite sex. **Good dates;** 17, 21 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 6. **Favourable directions:** South and east.



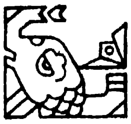
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) You will gain through unexpected sources. Those of you in service may get a promotion. Elders and womenfolk will contribute to your happiness You may have to undertake a journey. Devote your time to your business affairs. The time is favourable for dealing in property matters. Romance is likely. Letters will bring good tidings. **Good dates:** 17, 19 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North-west



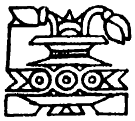
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) You will experience happiness and good fortune this week. A romantic relationship may develop. Social activities will demand a lot of your time. Your intellectual and artistic activities will be appreciated. Those of you in service may gain recognition from your employers. Do not neglect your business affairs. Your are advised to make changes on your vocational front. Elders will prove to be helpful. **Good dates:** 19, 21 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-east.



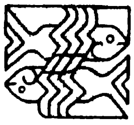
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This week your stars are in a favourable position. Push all your business affairs to the utmost. The time is favourable as far as expansion in business and speculation are concerned. You will gain through the advice of your friends and relatives. A happy romance is likely. You may have to go on an unexpected journey. **Good dates:** 17, 20 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 5 and 9. **Favourable directions:** West and South.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) You are advised to exercise tact and circumspection in all your dealings. You are required to exercise patience and courage to combat problems on your domestic and professional fronts. Do not start with any new venture. What you need now is enterprise and good sense. Do not take unnecessary risks. Try to keep your temper in control. **Good dates:** 20, 21 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 8. **Favourable directions:** East and west.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) You will be unnecessarily blamed by your friends and relatives. The time is good for you financially Avoid arguments with your friends and employers. You are required to pay attention to your domestic front. Do not lend money to others. You are advised not to be overoptimistic. Do not allow a person of the opposite sex to interfere with your work. **Good dates:** 17, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 9. **Favourable directions:** East and west.



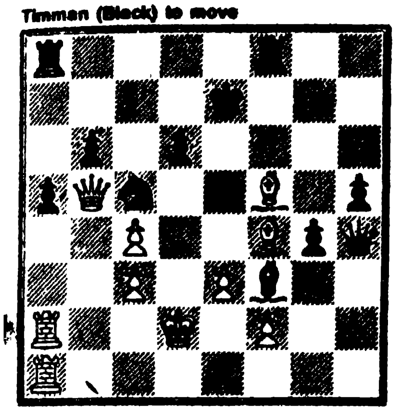
PISCES (15 March—14 April) You will achieve immense success on your business and professional fronts. An important change in your career is foreseen. Some of you may change your residence. Your prospects this week are on the whole excellent. You will be offered a golden opportunity this week. You are advised to make the most of it. A valuable new friendship may develop. Make hay while the sun shines. **Good dates:** 17, 22 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.

Political forecast for Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee: Mr Vajpayee will be the most powerful man in his party and also probably in the central government. However, he will not be able to stay in power for the full term. He may suffer from ill-health between 26 October 1981 and October 1982. He might even meet with a major accident during this period. If he survives, he will certainly hold a responsible position in the central government after October 1982. It will not be surprising if he becomes the Prime Minister of the country.

AMRITLAL

chess

Timman (Black) to move



Korchnoi (White)

Position after Black's 26th move

The magic touch

When two players conspire to produce a game which defies comprehension it is perhaps worth speculating whether they themselves actually understood what was happening. Take for example the remarkable Korchnoi-Timman encounter from the Phillips and Drew tournament earlier this year

It has been said that if a monkey hammered away at a keyboard for long enough it would eventually reproduce the complete works of Beethoven. The Korchnoi-Timman game might appear at first sight to have been produced by this very same musicological monkey. Baffling and incongruous moves follow each other in pairs until finally as if by magic everything disappears from the board and the game is drawn. So it is perhaps fair to ask if the players really did know what they were doing or if they were just muddling through in a state of mutual bewilderment.

The answer is that they understood perfectly Black was winning and White was losing, as simple as that, and in a situation where the obvious move obviously loses, White was obliged to improvise. Eventually the complications became such that even Timman lost his way. A mind-boggling game, though evidently not quite enough to boggle Korchnoi's mind.

White Korchnoi. Black· Timman
Queen's Indian Defence

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—K3; 3. N—KB3, P—QN3; 4. N—B3, B—N5; 5. B—N5, B—N2; 6. P—K3, P—KR3; 7. B—R4, P—KN4; 8. B—N3, N—K5; 9. Q—B2, B x N+; 10. P x B, P—Q3; 11. B—Q3, P—KB4; 12. P—QR4?

An abortive experiment. The pawn sacrifice 12. P—Q5! P x P; 13. P x P, B x P; 14. N—Q4 followed by P—B3 is known to be good for White here.

12. . . ., P—KR4! A powerful reply. White now sacrifices (i.e. loses) his KNP without obtaining much real compensation.

13. P—KR4, P—N5; 14. N—Q2, N x N; 15. K x N, B x P; 16. KR—KN1, B—B6; 17. P—Q5 The best try for some play.

17. . . ., Q—B3; 18. P—R5, K—K2!! A superb move based on simple logic. The KBP needs support and if the king is the closest piece at hand, then so be it.

19. RP x P, BP x P; 20. P x P, K x P!; 21. Q—N3, K—K2; 22. Q—N5, N—Q2! The refutation of White's play is complete. If 23. Q x BP, Q x Q; 24. B x Q, N—B4 White has a positionally lost endgame, while 23. B x BP, N—B4; 24. B—B2, B—K5 is also clearly very bad for White. Korchnoi decides that a complicated bad position offers more chances than a simple bad position.

23. R—R2, KR—KB1; 24. KR—QR1, P—R4; 25. B—B4, Q x RP; 26. B x BP At last removing the vital KBP – and also vacating the Q3 square for his king after 26. . . ., Q x P+.

26. . . ., N—B4

DIAGRAM

27. B x P+! The last chance.

27. . . ., K x B; 28. Q x P+, B—B3; 29. R—Q1! Setting the quaint trap 29. . . ., Q x P+; 30. K—B1 check! winning the queen.

29. . . ., R x B; 30. K—B1+, K—K2; 31. Q x B, R—K1? Finally letting White off the hook. After 31 . . ., R—R2! White's attack would soon fizzle out.

32. R x P! For if 32. . . ., N—N6+, 33. K—N2, N x R, then R—Q7+, K—B1; 35. Q—R6+ and Q—N7 mate.

32. . . ., Q—B3; 33. R—R7+, K—B1; 34. Q x Q, R x Q; 35. R—Q6! Winning the KRP and saving the game.

35. . . ., R—K4; 36. R—Q8+, R—K1; 37. R—Q6, N—N6+; 38. K—B2, R—N1; 39. R x P, R x P+; 40. K—Q1, R—Q1+; 41. K—K1, R—B2; 42. R x R+ Draw agreed. After 42. . . ., K x R; 43. R—N5, R—N1; 44. R x R, K x R; 45. K—B2 Black will lose his last pawn.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

Reporting a world championship match between Australia and the team described as Central-American-Caribbean, Jim Borin began: 'Once again CAC proved to be most dangerous opponents.' I wouldn't have thought so, looking at the play of this hand:

Dealer, West. Love all.

	North	
	♠ 8 3 ♥ 9 8 6 4 ♦ K Q 10 9 5 ♣ J 3	
West ♠ A K Q 6 4 2 ♥ 3 ♦ A 8 2 ♣ K 10 7	N W E S	**East** ♠ J 10 9 7 5 ♥ J 2 ♦ J 7 6 4 ♣ 6 4
	♠ — ♥ A K Q 10 7 5 ♦ 3 ♣ A Q 9 8 5 2	

The Australian West opened with a conventional One Club and the bidding continued:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1♣	No	1♦
4♥	4♠	5♥	5♠
6♥	No	No	dble
No	No	No	

South ruffed the spade lead, drew trumps, and led his singleton diamond. West went up with the Ace and led – a club. This couldn't be right, because, whatever his distribution in the minors, declarer was never going to be able to dispose of his club loser.

The CAC displayed unusual fire-power on another deal:

Dealer, North. E-W vulnerable.

	North	
	♠ K 9 7 5 ♥ K 8 4 3 ♦ 10 4 3 2 ♣ 6	
West ♠ A Q 10 6 4 ♥ Q 5 ♦ 5 ♣ A Q J 9 4	N W E S	**East** ♠ J 8 3 2 ♥ A J ♦ A J 9 8 ♣ 10 3 2
	♠ — ♥ 10 9 7 6 2 ♦ K Q 7 6 ♣ K 8 7 5	

The CAC North opened Two Diamonds (8-12, any 4-4-4-1). South responded 2NT, North bid Three Clubs (the singleton), and South Four Hearts. West inertly passed, so the Australians accepted a small penalty in exchange for a fair vulnerable slam.

'Squeeze play is simply a knack. It is not difficult but it has to be studied,' say Terence Reese and Patrick Jourdain in *Squeeze Play is Easy* (Allen and Unwin, £6.95).

TERENCE REESE

stamps

Ships which have played a part in the exploration of Antarctica are featured on five new stamps issued for the use of personnel at the bases of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions The 1-dollar value shows HMS Resolution This was the ship in which Captain Cook made his second voyage of exploration in the South Pacific, during which he became the first navigator to cross the Antarctic Circle, eventually reaching 71° South The Resolution, which was also Cook's flagship during his third and last voyage, can already be seen on issues from the Cook Islands, New Zealand, Norfolk Island and the British Antarctic Territory The new stamps are intended to complement five similar stamps issued for the Australian Antarctic Territory in 1979

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. In gambling parlance, what is a dog?
2. What would you be doing if you were interested in chirognomy?
3. If you were afraid of movement, what would you be suffering from?
4. What is an Australian boomerang known as?
5. Who are the three major Russian classical composers who suffered from attacks on their style by the government?
6. What does Deadly Nightshade contain?

ANSWERS

1. A racehorse who quits under pressure.
2. The unscientific attempt to read character from the lines in the hand as different from palmistry.
3. Kinesophobia.
4. Kylie.
5. Sergey Prokofiev (1891-1953), Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) and Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943).
6. Deadly Nightshade or Belladonna contains alkaloid atropine which is valuable as medicine but poisonous in large doses.

this india

prize rs 30 for the entry given first

BOMBAY: The Bombay High Court today (23 April) granted an interim injunction restraining the international airports authority of India from interfering with the right to sport a beard by one of its fire operators, Surendran Vasudevan. Mr Justice M. L. Pendse granted the injunction while admitting a writ petition by Vasudevan. Vasudevan contended that he was growing the beard to fulfil a religious vow, but the authority, though told of this, refused him permission and asked him to shave off the three-month-old growth. The petitioner said another fire operator, M. P. Munz, was allowed to sport a beard for the last several years, while he had been denied that right. Vasudevan contended that he had filed the petition to assert his fundamental right to equality, personal liberty and religious freedom. At the stage of admission, it was urged on behalf of the authority, that the beard was a security hazard, a fire hazard, and was against discipline. It was submitted that an employee had to seek the authority's permission to grow a beard. Mr Justice Pendse rejected the authority's submission and admitted the petition—*Hindu* (Surendranath Shelley, Hyderabad)

NEW DELHI: A person who used to win the confidence of affluent people through his melodious recital of the scriptures and then steal valuables from their homes was arrested. Piare Lal alias *Guruji*, originally of Varanasi, was caught by the Lawrence Road police and gold and silver ornaments valued at Rs 50,000 reportedly stolen from the Trinagar house of Mr Kedar Nath, were recovered. According to the police, the suspect would rent a house in a residential colony and organise *satsangs* and *kirtans* to gain free access to resident's houses. After Mr Kedar Nath reported the theft to the police *Guruji* was rounded up and interrogated. He broke down and confessed the theft—*Times of India* (Rashbehari Das, Calcutta)

DURG: Confusion over the allotment of a coupe in the Nizamuddin-bound Chhattisgarh Express led to a wordy duel between a Madhya Pradesh minister and a Soviet expert of the Bhilai Steel Plant at the railway station resulting in the detaining of the train for over an hour. It was officially learnt that the Soviet expert, Mr Mogyletsev, and his wife had *pucca* reservations by first class for their journey from Durg to Nizamuddin. The couple was allotted a coupe. As it happened, the minister of state for cooperation, Mr Kanhaiya Sharma boarded the train before Durg and finding the coupe vacant occupied it. On reaching Durg station the minister got down to meet people while the Russian couple occupied the coupe. As the minister returned and asked the couple to vacate the coupe the expert and his Russian colleagues present at the station resisted. An exchange of hot words followed. The situation was prevented from becoming tense by the minister who eventually agreed to move to another coupe—*Hindu* (R. Sundha, Madras)

NEW DELHI: The telephone department had "wrongly" derived a revenue of Rs 25 lakhs from "wrong" calls in 1979-80, according to approximate calculations. It amounted to less than 0.8 per cent of the total calls in automatic exchanges, the estimates committee of the Lok Sabha was told by a representative of the P and T Board. But the explanation gave no consolation to the subscribers who actually had to pay for the "wrong call phenomenon", the committee said in its 11th report on telephones presented to the Lok Sabha. It observed that the telephone authorities had discovered that ineficiency did not result in loss of revenue. On the contrary, the department seemed to flourish on the growing number of wrong and infructuous calls—*Times of India* (Ghanshyam Gupta, Delhi)

india abroad

DUBAI. An Indian national is alleged to have swindled more than Rs 480 lakhs from a travel agency here and escaped to India. The Dubai police has sought assistance from the Indian police and the Interpol to trace the Indian and recover the money. A team of police officers left here for Bombay on 10 April. The alleged swindler, a resident of Bombay, had been living in Dubai for the last 20 years. He was working as a senior acountant with the Dubai National Air Travel Agency (DNATA) which is owned by the ruling family. He got a fresh passport from the Indian consulate here in March and within a fortnight left for Bombay on 3 April. He is said to have left without informing his office. DNATA lodged a complaint with the police alleging embezzlement of 22 million *dirhams* by him. One *dirham* is equivalent to Rs 2.20—*Indian Express*

without comment

You know in which direction he (A. R. Antulay) is going. Who can restrain him?—Mrs Gandhi while inaugurating the new Council Hall building in Bombay

(An impression was created that) Kashmir is not a part of India but a colony of the Congress(I)—Farooq Abdullah, MP and president-elect of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference party

This year's budget is for black money, of black money and—I would not like to say by black money—certainly by friends of black money—Atal Behari Vajpayee, BJP president

Mrs Gandhi does not need cooperation even from her own party, let alone opposition parties—Chandra Shekhar, Janata Party president

The Congress(I) is not ready for the poll. They are (busy) killing each other—Jyoti Basu, West Bengal CM on the Election Commission's decision to postpone by-elections in the state

My government is running quite efficiently and in fact better than any government in the past in the state—Jagannath Pahadia, Rajasthan CM

If on every small increase in the wholesale price index or the consumer price index the government were to resign, the country will have no government at all. We will have only continuous elections, and no government—R. Venkataraman, union minister of finance

Sometimes systems are responsible for making man corrupt—A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhuri, union minister for energy, quoted in *Current*

I am the Coca Cola man—Piloo Mody, Janata member in Rajya Sabha

It will harm them, not me. The CPI cannot move an inch without me—S. A. Dange on his expulsion from the CPI.

Mrs Gandhi is now playing the Russian game in reverse: to extract concessions from Moscow in the domestic field in exchange for her support to them in regional and international disputes—S. Nihal Singh

We are not against Western support to Pakistan. What we are against is their arms supplies as we see in this a greater move against detente—Mrs Gandhi

Illustration: Bhusan Malik

War clouds over India

By V. K. MADHAVAN KUTTY

In the latest issue of the Lok Sabha *Who's who* many of our members have shown "reading" as their favourite past-time. But of late, I have a suspicion that most of them have switched over to cloud-watching. Ever since the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, said that war clouds are over India, many of her colleagues have started looking towards the skies.

The home minister, Mr Zail Singh, has seen the clouds while he was in Bombay recently Next to the Prime Minister, the first one to see the clouds was the home minister. Rightly so And, I am sure, many of her colleagues would start seeing the clouds shortly and those who do not will continue to look at the skies

The former Prime Minister, Mr Morarji Desai, (he may be known as the first and last Janata Prime Minister) does not see any clouds anywhere I asked him, "Sir, others have seen it why don't you see them?"

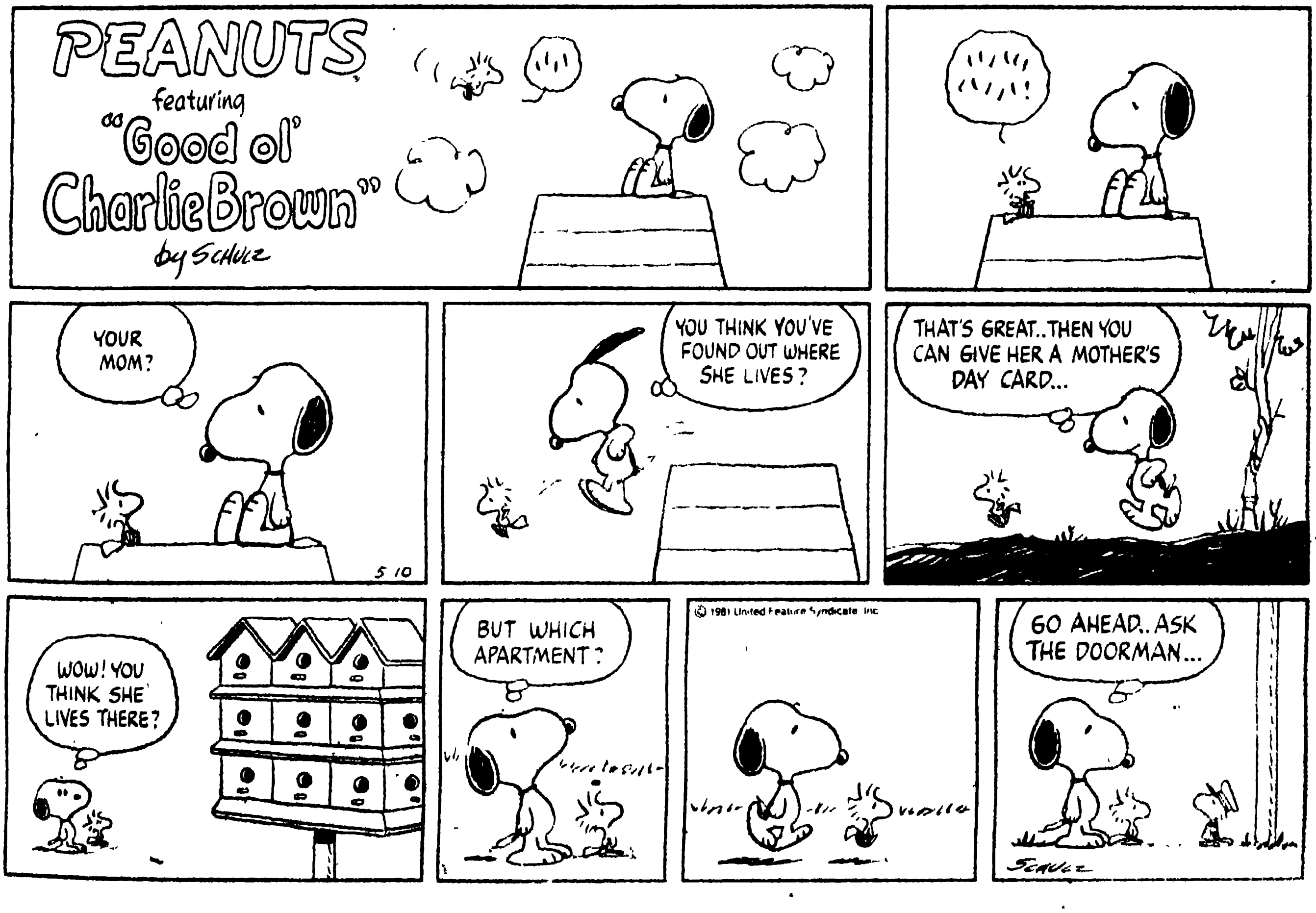
"If others have seen, that does not mean I should see it. If your vision is not clear you may see clouds. Since I am not sitting on her seat I do not see any clouds. If I was there I may also see. The clouds she has seen are not real If they are not real they are false. That means they are not there."

The Janata party chief, Mr Chandra Sekhar, agreed to talk about the clouds. But he neither denied nor confirmed the clouds. He said that these clouds are created by Mrs Gandhi. Artificial clouds can only bring artificial rains

I approached Mr Jyotirmoy Bosu. He refused to comment. He seemed disillusioned "What is the point in reacting to it if I cannot move an adjournment motion or call an attention motion or at least a half-hour discussion in Parliament. My motions on this would not be accepted. If it is an internal cloud, they say they are waiting for the report from the meteorological department. If it is a cloud from Pakistan's side, they would say that it does not come under our jurisdiction. Then should I take it up in the Pakistani Parliament! Strange. If I say there are various reports and statements to this effect they would say that the matter cannot be raised on mere newspaper reports. Their attitude is if clouds cannot be seen by all how can it be a subject matter for discussion. And if clouds can be seen by all why discussion at all."

The CPI reaction was more vociferous. "Our party's National Council like the National Executive before, have seen the clouds for the past so many years. In fact we have warned about these clouds earlier. The clouds of America, Pakistan and China are having a conspiracy to bring cold war to our region to defeat the socialist character of the sub-continent which we have built with the help of our Soviet socialist friends. We shall defeat the designs of the imperialists by meeting the clouds with all our strength. The need of the hour is to expose the party formed by the defectors and unitedly forge ahead by all leftist forces. We call upon our party units to march towards the Boat Club, organise meetings and hold rallies."

When the meteorological department was contacted, they only said, "It is fair to cloudy weather. There will be more intermittent thunders." Reacting to this a Congress(I) MP said, "Meteorology doesn't suit our system." ■


PEANUTS
featuring "Good ol' CharlieBrown"
by Schulz
YOUR MOM?
5/10
YOU THINK YOU'VE FOUND OUT WHERE SHE LIVES?
THAT'S GREAT..THEN YOU CAN GIVE HER A MOTHER'S DAY CARD...
WOW! YOU THINK SHE LIVES THERE?
BUT WHICH APARTMENT?
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GO AHEAD..ASK THE DOORMAN...
SCHULZ

ANDHRA CM APPOINTS AMBASSADOR TO DELHI

IF chief minister T. Anjiah has his way, then the Andhra Pradesh government will soon be having the largest state government complex in New Delhi. The palaces of the former princes around India Gate in the heart of the city became the properties of the respective state governments after the merger of the princely states in 1948. Hyderabad House, the palatial guest house of the ministry of external affairs, where foreign dignitaries are often lodged during their visits, belongs to the Andhra government. Unlike the governments of Kerala and Rajasthan, who have filed cases against the central government regarding the palaces of the former princes of Travancore and Bikaner respectively, the Andhra government has asked the centre to give it land in central Delhi in return for Hyderabad House. If the Andhra proposal is accepted, then three houses on Ashoka Road, numbers 5, 7 and 9, will be given to the state government and an eight-storeyed building will be constructed there. Mr Anjiah plans to build an auditorium and a *kalyana-mantapam*—which means a complex for marriages, which can be hired at a nominal charge. If this proposal goes through, then the South Indian community in Delhi will get a readymade facility for celebrating marriages.

The exigencies of partisan politics are also being taken care of—the new complex will have a 60-room guest house, which will ensure that the present state guest house does not get crammed when the entire legislature party lands up to lobby in Delhi, as was the case when the anti-Channa Reddy campaign was on. And Mr Anjiah has created a new ministerial-level post in New Delhi and appointed his close confidant, Mr S. Indrasain Reddy, as the special representative of the Andhra government. Mr Reddy, a former Youth Congress general secretary of the Ambika Soni days, was one of the kingpins in the remove-Channa Reddy campaign. This appointment, therefore, not only rewards him, but also keeps in Delhi, on Mr Anjiah's behalf, a person who can keep a close watch on the factional politics which plagues Andhra Pradesh.

ANTULAY MEETS HAJI MASTAN

ON 19 April the entire family of the Prime Minister went to Bombay to attend a wedding in the late Mr Feroze Gandhi's family. It was described as a personal trip of the PM, but politics did not seem to leave her. The dissidents in the Congress(I) utilised the visit to air their grievances. Initially, the dissidents could not reach the PM because chief minister Antulay would not allow them to. But Mr J. B. Dhote, the bearded MP from the Vidharba region, managed to gatecrash, and told the PM that many dissidents wanted to meet her. To Mr Antulay's chagrin, Mrs Gandhi agreed to meet them. The main charge levelled by the dissidents was that three former COFEPOSA (Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Act) detenus, Yusuf Patel, Haji Mastan and Kamal Chaddah, were often seen in the Sachivalaya and the CM held lengthy meetings with them even at the cost of keeping ruling party MLAs waiting. Mrs Gandhi also used the trip to meet many Maratha leaders of the Congress(U) in Maharashtra. She is said to have told them that Mr Antulay could be removed if the Marathas in the Congress(U) crossed the floor and joined her party.

INDUSTRY MINISTER IGNORED

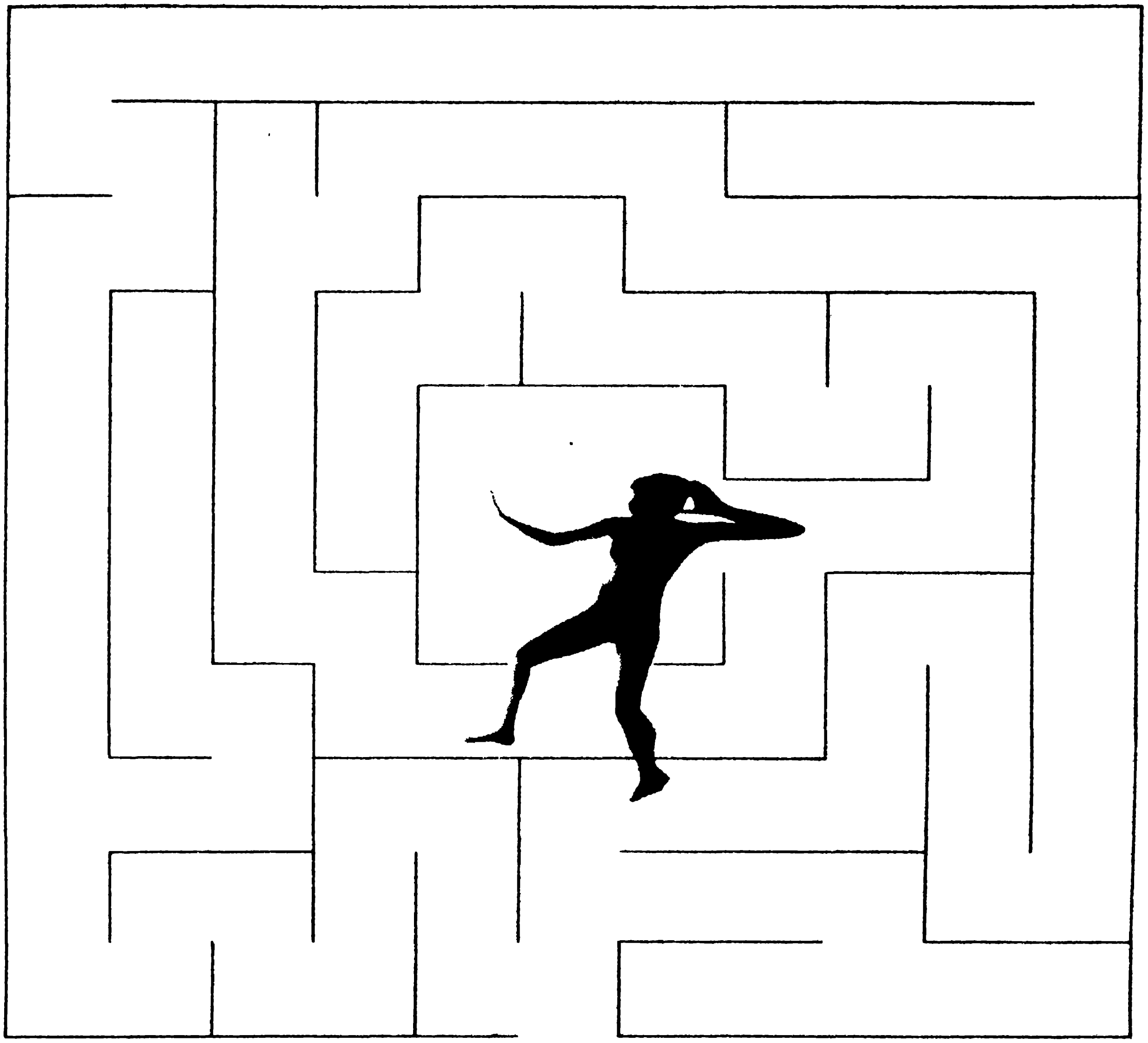
DOES the industry minister, Mr Charanjit Chanana, know everything that goes on in his ministry? At least he did not know about the top appointments in the nationalised Maruti Udyog Ltd, the successor to Sanjay Gandhi's vehicles project. One morning when Mr Chanana had gone to 1, Akbar Road, the official portion of the Prime Minister's residence, he saw Mr V. Krishnamurthy, the former secretary (heavy industry) there. (Mr Chanana had been instrumental in removing Mr Krishnamurthy from the industry ministry last year.) After some time Mr Arun Nehru, the MP from Rae Bareli, appeared on the scene and told Mr Krishnamurthy, "Now that you are coming back to the government..." Mr Chanana was stunned. Where and how was Mr Krishnamurthy coming back? He could not find the answer then at 1, Akbar Road, but when he went back to his desk at the Udyog Bhavan, he received an instruction from the Prime Minister's secretariat asking him to prepare the case files for the appointments of Mr S. Mulgaonkar as the chairman and Mr V. Krishnamurthy as the vice-chairman and managing director of the Maruti Udyog Ltd. Apparently, the PM's office did not want to take Mr Chanana into confidence in the initial stages. The chairmanship of this prestigious vehicles project, which is expected to roll out a modern passenger car in 1983, was offered to the TELCO chairman, Mr Mulgaonkar, by Mrs Gandhi herself. When Mr Mulgaonkar refused to take a chief executive's job, Mr Krishnamurthy, who is also a former chairman of BHEL, was appointed the chief executive and the top post was given to Mr Mulgaonkar on a part-time basis.

HOW LONG CAN THE MP HIDE?

THE customs authorities are in a dilemma. Two months ago a senior Karnataka MP, who is also an officebearer of the Congress(I) party in Parliament, was nabbed by Delhi airport customs for carrying contraband worth several lakhs of rupees. The MP managed to wriggle out by throwing his weight around, but the incident has come up in Parliament. So, while there are pressures on the customs officers to drop the case, there are also counter pressures (from Congress-I MPs, no less) to keep the case open. The senior Rajya Sabha member, Mr Bhupesh Gupta of the CPI, had even named the MP, who belongs to the Lok Sabha, during a debate in the upper house in the presence of finance minister R. Venkataraman. The minister neither confirmed nor denied the charge. But the reference to the Lok Sabha member's name was expunged from the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha as the chairman thought it improper to allow attacks on a member of the lower house. But the troubles of the errant MP are not over because some MPs belonging to a rival faction of the ruling party in Karnataka politics have laid their hands on photostats of the customs documents and are circulating them among some opposition MPs. Interestingly, this MP has made several trips abroad in the last 15 months and is intimately connected with a leading soft drinks manufacturer and often pleads his case in the house.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

There has to be a way out.



What does a man do when he wants to work and can't get a job? What does a man do when he knows a craft or a trade but doesn't have the money to set himself up in business? What does a man do when every opening leads to a dead end? What does a man do when he is trapped in the maze of poverty, despair and hopelessness?

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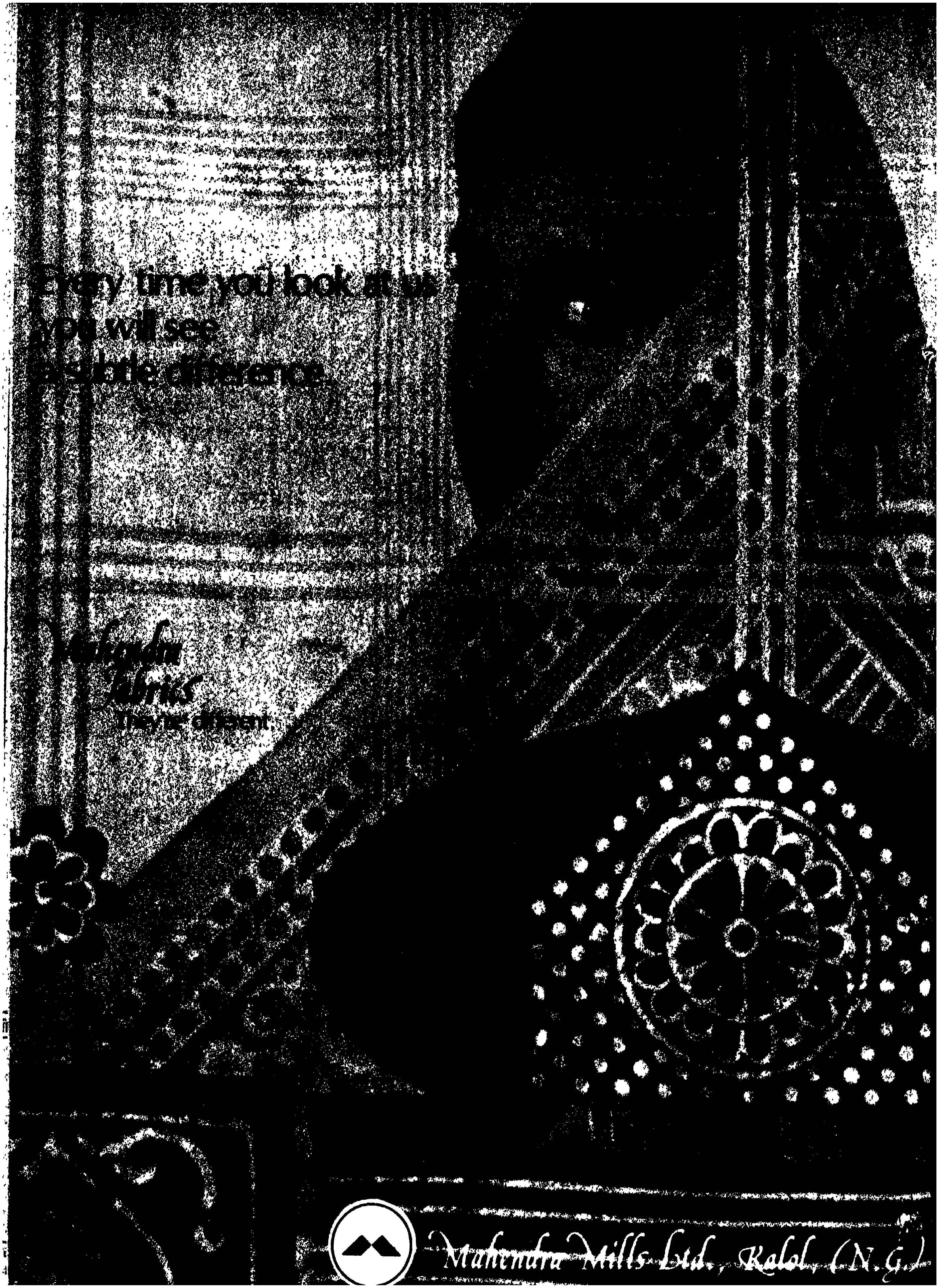
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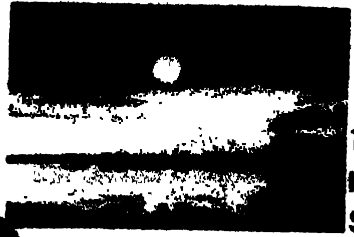

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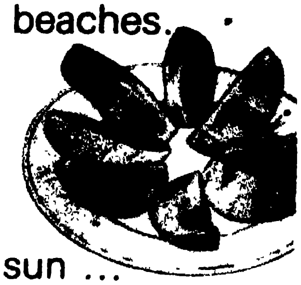

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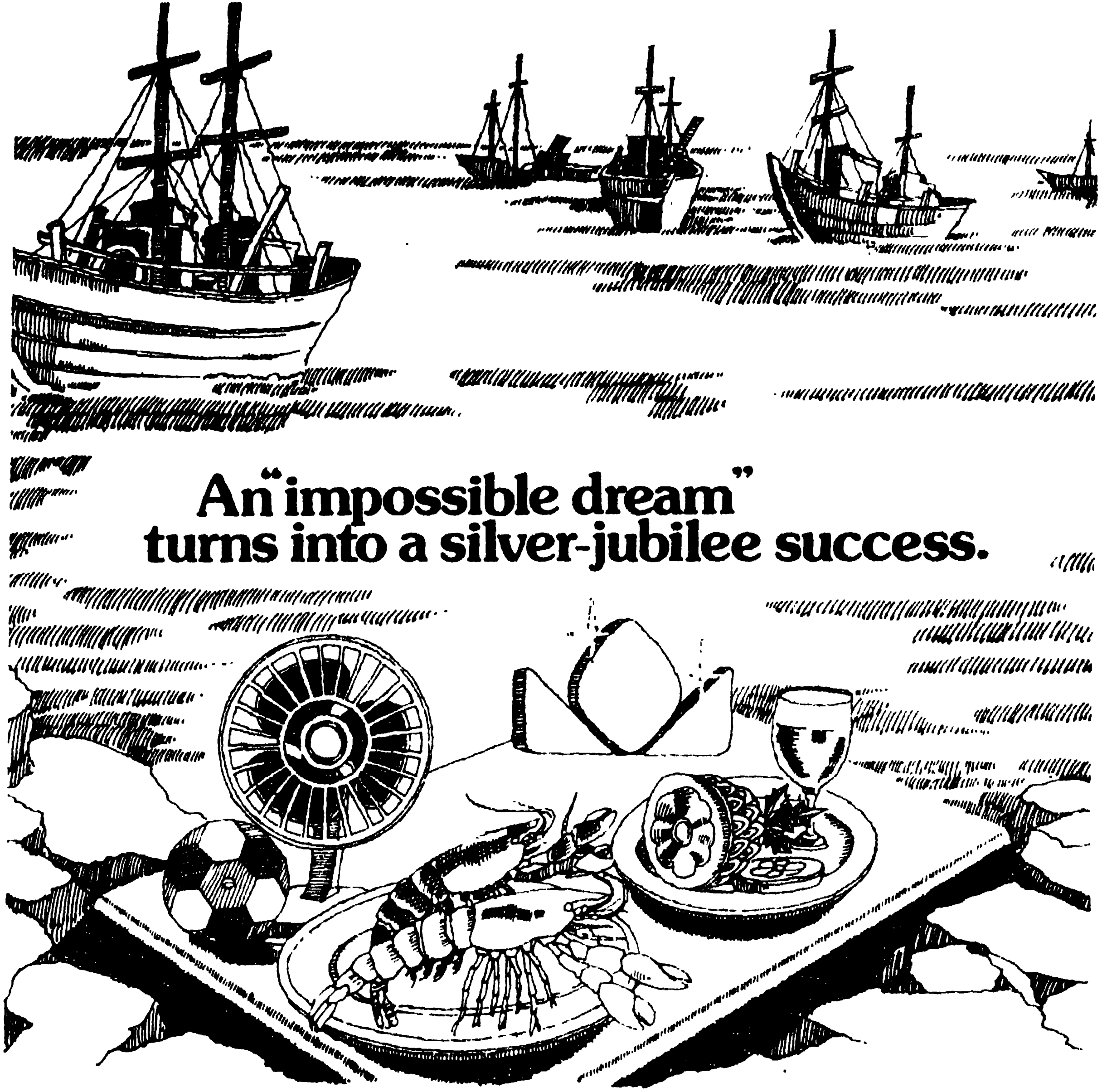

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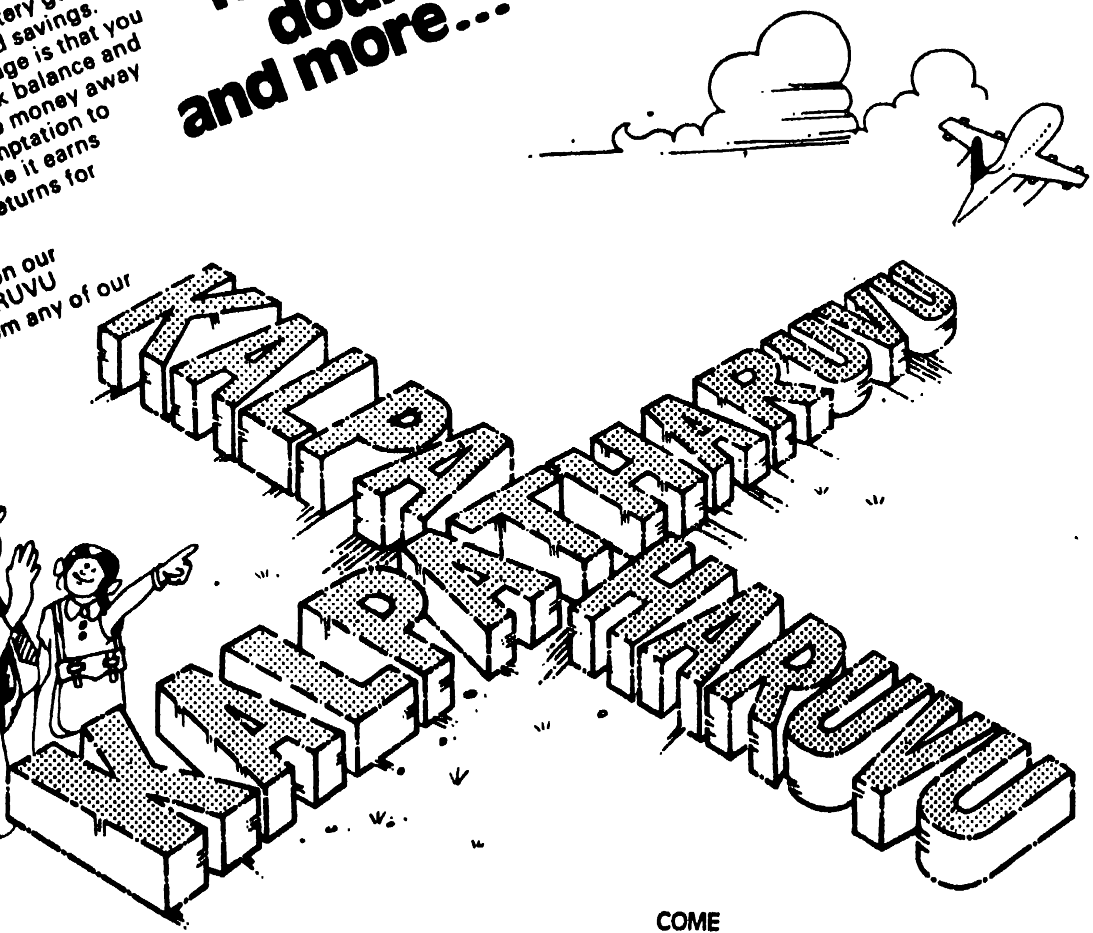

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SUNDAY VOLUME 8
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May 17, 1981

Nargis Dutt, who rose to become the queen of the Indian cinema during her over three-decade-long film career died in Bombay on 3 May after a long battle with cancer Her public life began at four when she first stepped out before the arc lamps in her mother's film and the last two of her 52 years saw her in the Rajya Sabha in an entirely different role. She will remain immortal to millions of her fans through films like *Aag, Awara, Andaaz* and especially *Mother India* Awards she won aplenty from the 'Best Actress' at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival to the Padma Shree. But, perhaps, the best award she could have received before her death was the knowledge that her son, Sunjay, was well on his way to becoming a star In this special tribute to Nargis, SUNDAY traces her career, talks to those who were close to her and records how two generations of fans bid their one and only 'first lady' goodbye.

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Cover transparency of Nargis Dutt by Dilip Chakravarty

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Casteism and crime

The hunt for Phoolan Devi (19 April) gives the impression that Uttar Pradesh is still reeling under widespread caste conflict.
Ashok Kumar Pandey, Hooghly

Phoolan Devi's miraculous escape from the police's hands shows that she has a saviour—goddess Kali.
Kali Prasad Sarangi, Puri

Tears came to my eyes when I learnt of the ghastly end of Baba Mustaqim, a hero to his people. It is the apathy of authority towards popular grievances that turn men and women into *baghis* (and not 'dacoits' as many insist on calling them). I appeal to the authorities to pardon Phoolan Devi and let her come out of hiding and live like a law-abiding citizen.
Saumitra Mukherjee, Howrah

Phoolan Devi's escape does not prove how brave or clever she is; it shows that the police are inefficient.
Supriyo Banerjee, Puri

I request the government to please give Phoolan Devi a chance to transform herself. She should be saved from bullets and the gallows.
Sanjit Chakraborty, Asansol

Cruel kidnappers

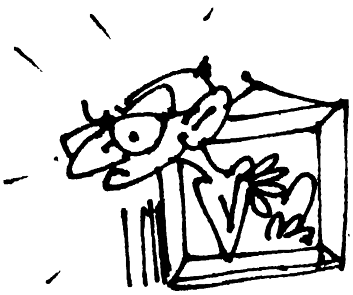
This baby was stolen and sold (19 April) was shocking. It is inhuman to kidnap innocent children and then make criminals and beggars of them.
C. Bhagwandas, Calcutta

The report shows how heartless some people can be.
Sampa Roy, Bokaro

Punishment for these inhuman criminals should be severe, proportionate to the excruciating pain a stolen child's mother has to suffer. Unfortunately, our laws are too liberal; hardened criminals get away with small fines and sentences.
Y. V. R. Rao, 99 APO

Errors, errors, errors

Of course, you found out errors in only one part of the film made on Gandhi (*There are nearly 100 errors in Gandhi,* 19 April). When completed, this film will be named a film of erorrs. This film is a great conspiracy against the downtrodden people of India and the world for whom Gandhiji fought and worked up to his last breath through love and non-violence. It is vested interests—national and international—who are distorting the image of Gandhi in order to play down the importance of non-violence and love which, in the words of Lohia, will create new human beings who will wipe out the diseases of capitalism and imperialism. The film has another aim: Nehru will be shown either as a parallel or superior to Gandhiji. Americans are taking an interest in this film because they want to use Gandhi as a weapon against the increasing international domination of Russia in the name of communism. It is useless to try and persuade the government to see the script and correct the errors; the government is also a partner in this conspiracy.
Radha Kant Yadav, MLA, Patna



The film repeatedly mentions the Nehru family, but avoids men like C. R. Das. A heap of public money has been spent on making an erroneous film.
Sisir Kumar Sarkar, Krishnagar, West Bengal

I can hardly accept that these "errors" in John Briley's script arise purely out of ignorance. It seems that Messrs Attenborough and Briley are bent on projecting a biased image of Gandhiji before the masses. The script is sickening. I can well imagine how the historian-author of the article felt after going through 202 pages of the stuff. Mr Attenborough is a proper Englishman who is not interested in the truth. He has neglected Gandhiji's battle against untouchability and underestimated his Quit India movement. Naturally, these facts are hard for the Englishman to digest. SUNDAY should investigate how the government passed a script which defames the Mahatma.
Sujit Bhar, Calcutta

How is the government financing such fiction? There is still time to correct the script.
Tanuj Kumar Pattnaik, Puri

The errors will definitely tarnish the image of Mahatma Gandhi who is an eternal inspiration for mankind. People will be seeing a different Gandhi on screen when the film is shown. How have such mistakes gone unchecked by a government which wants to promote Gandhiji's ideals, non-violence, truth and fearlessness, throughout the globe?
S. Maharana, Bolangir, Orissa

"Errors" was a weak word for the deliberate travesty of truth; "distortion" would have been more correct.
Chinmoy Hota, Bhubaneswar

In my opinion it is the government of India which made the biggest mistake—by passing John Briley's ridiculous script.
Syed Azam Hussain, Samastipur

The most glaring error in *Gandhi* is Gandhi himself. The only one who looks real on the cover is Attenborough! Gandhi resembles a martial arts practitioner, and Kasturba, an advertisement for grandma's face cream.
Shyamala Ramaswamy, New Delhi

In all probability, John Briley (and for that matter, Attenborough) have a mission in camouflage. Their film is an attempt to assassinate an already dead Gandhi; it should be seized and shelved.
Lekhraj Dass, Barasat, West Bengal

Gandhi, the film and the man, is being shot the second time.
Arun V. Mahajan, Bombay

Excellent, timely

The interview with Dr Subramaniam Swamy ("*I have never been a chamcha and never will.*" 19 April) was excellent and timely. He is the only free-thinking Indian politician who has an independent stand on political and economic matters
Badal Das, Bhubaneswar

If, as Mr Swamy thinks, the BJP's claim to being an alternative to the Congress(I) is fraudulent, is not the claim of the Janata's chances of coming to power in the next election also laughable? Whatever be Mr Swamy's reasons for still remaining in the Janata after the birth of the BJP, one is inclined to believe that he was neither invited nor refused admission to the BJP Mr Swamy claims that there is discipline in the BJP due to "fear" rather than persuasion; is there any in the Janata? Was Mr Swamy not removed from the general secretaryship in a reckless move?. Did he not have differences with Mr Chandra Shekhar?
B. S. Badrinath, Bangalore

Dr Swamy appears to be overestimating himself. Besides, his conception of Chandra Shekhar as a dictator is wrong. As a seasoned politician, Dr Swamy should refrain from criticising his party president, for the sake of the Janata.
T.V.S. Murthy, Sambalpur

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

Upper caste racket

Karnataka is notorious for a flourishing racket in the sale of professional degrees to upper caste boys (*Karnataka's money-spinning colleges*, 19 April). If you are an upper caste, you can buy yourself an MBBS or BE degree for several thousands of rupees, get a job and a huge dowry. Students of lower castes are not allowed into these colleges even if they are ready to pay the "capitation fee." If this practice continues, in the long run, worthless upper caste professionals will capture the top posts of public and private undertakings, and dominate over underdeveloped communities. This is bound to have serious repercussions. What is the ratio of professionals from economically and socially backward communities to those from upper castes, anyway? Is it increasing or decreasing? It was alleged that a particular community in Andhra Pradesh has set up a private medical college which has produced 750 doctors in ten years. In all probability, medical education in Andhra Pradesh has been completely captured by economically well-off forward castes. Backward classes of the country must unite and fight this stranglehold.
M.B. Rao, Calcutta

About three years ago, engineers were in great demand in Karnataka. Now the 37 engineering colleges in Karnataka have virtually turned into factories producing engineers. About 9,000 engineering graduates are passing out every year and thousands of jobless engineers are roaming streets. At present there are about 6,000 unemployed engineers in the state. Under such depressing conditions, why permit anyone and everyone to start engineering colleges and swindle students? Parents should think twice before sending their children to such colleges.

H. M. Muniyappa, Bangalore

Behind the scenes

The hit generation (29 March) showed the ugly face of the film distributor and how the big-budget multistarrer is becoming less of a craze. The fact is, films like *Shaan* satisfy no one for longer than three hours; after people have seen *Shaan*, they go home, and return a few days later to see *Kranti*. The process continues endlessly. On the other hand, an *Albert Pinto*, or a *Nishant* or *Ankur* leaves a lasting impression on the mind.
Fazal Iman Mallick, Monghyr

The standard of a commercial film cannot be compared with that of an art film because their approaches are different. Why compare artists who perform in them? Amitabh is today's superstar; Naseeruddin, one hopes, will be a super actor tomorrow.
Jayanta Nandi Roy, Gauhati

It is surprising that Anil Saari omitted to mention films like *Shodh*, *Duratwa*, *Garam Bhat*, *Baishey Sravan*, *Maina Tadanta*, *36 Chowringhee Lane*, and names like Biplab Bhaskar, Buddhadev Bhattacharya, Purnendu Patri, Pattabardhanas, Aparna Sen, and Utpalendu Chakraborty. Even Opal, Lari and Yagyam were ignored. Was it because these films and personalities are not Bombay-based?
Sugata Ghose, Darjeeling

Spy?

C. M. Ibrahim, Karnataka minister: Arab spy? (5 April) reveals nothing except that the author had interviewed both Messrs Ibrahim and A. K. Subbiah, BJP MLA, who made the allegations. How did the author conclude that Mr Ibrahim continues to stay in the cabinet only due to strong backing from the CM's close confidant, F. M. Khan? While levelling his charges against Mr Ibrahim, Mr Subbiah should have referred to specific instances. After all, Mr Subbiah's own party leader Atal Behari Vajpayee, when he was the external affairs minister, allowed Mr Moshe Dayan, the then Israeli foreign minister, and an official from South Africa (with whom we have no diplomatic relations), to enter and travel in our country under a guise, without visas.

S. S. Ahamad, Davangere, Karnataka

Unite, and fight

Mr Chandra Shekhar is right in calling upon leaders of other parties to join the Janata (*"We shall identify ourselves with the suffering of the poor,"* 1 March). A democratic system can only survive if there is a strong opposition; Messrs George Fernandes, Sharad Pawar, Madhu Limaye and others should join the Janata if they want to serve the country. Unless regional parties are dissolved, and all right-thinking politicians unite to form a national party, it is no use talking of democratic values and traditions.
C. V. Ganesh, Madras

In *Rising from the ashes* (1 March) Santosh Bhartiya writes "Sarnath, just off Varanasi, where the Buddha achieved enlightenment..." This is wrong. The Buddha achieved enlightenment in Bodhgaya, near Gaya. He preached his first sermon of *"Dhammachakkapavathana Sulta"* at Sarnath.
B. Veerabhadrarao, Buddhist Cultural Organisation, Visakhapatnam

Best is lost

The Indian Express has not just lost its best editor Ajit Bhattacharjea but also a great journalist in Kuldip Nayar (*Riddles of the Indian Express*, 29 March). Both these men had done their jobs very efficiently, bringing popularity and fame to the publication.
W. P. Suresh Paul, Bangalore

Done before

Apropos of *Autonomy for schoolchildren* (*Good News*, 29 March). Novel though the experiment is, it can hardly be claimed to be the first. Way back in 1953 or so, my school Vivek Vardhini High School, Hyderabad, undertook a similar operation. The jobs of administration and teaching, from the headmaster's down to the peon's, were handed over for a day to the pupils. The day was called "self-government day", and it was a complete success. But the headmaster, before handing over charge to the pupils, declared the following day a holiday!
Ravindra Kudrimoti, Adoni

Vulgar scene

Kranti can be called patriotic to a certain extent (*The revolution that is sweeping UP again*, 5 April), with the usual *filmi masala*. This time producer Manoj Kumar has tried to win the hearts of Muslim filmgoers by portraying Shatrughan Sinha as Karim Khan. But he has been unjust to the Christian community: in one of the scenes, when a British officer tries to molest Princess Meenakshi (Hema Malini), the cross is prominently displayed. This is hard to understand; Christianity never preaches such vulgarity.
P. Fernandes, Jabalpur

Forward association

Binoo K. John's *Where does the money go?* (4 January) explained the mystery about Kanfed—an association of a single forward community which, in the name of nonformal education, is exploiting the illiterate masses of Kerala who belong mainly to the scheduled and backward communities. Kanfed, according to a leaflet released by it, "works for all that is helpful for the promotion of social, economical, educational and intellectual development of our society." High officials of the state are members of this association. Therefore there is no question of it being a voluntary agency.

C. Maukaram, Trivandrum

Last letter

Noticing that *"Zindabad, Zindabad"* kept recurring in the loud slogans shouted by a group of striking workmen, a curious American [illegible] asked a south Indian friend [illegible] what the words stood for. [illegible]

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BY KULDIP NAYAR

The rare, objective bureaucrat

Once in a while there is a candid report by a government official. It seldon: sees the light of day because it is marked 'secret.' But at a time when conformity and sycophancy are so much in evidence only these reports sustain one's faith that there are still some left in the bureaucracy who can make objective assessments and have the courage to put their names on paper.

One such report is by a top serving police official, and it is on Hindu-Muslim riots in the last decade. His analysis may not be startling but it confirms what many have suspected and some have said before: they are the work of politicians.

"Hindu-Muslim communalism," according to the report, "has become a bone of contention in the struggle for power and this, to a large extent, has vitiated the atmosphere for the promotion of communal harmony." The report says: "In this situation intractable postures on the minority question are often assumed by politicians of different hues depending upon whether they are in power or in the opposition. In a country where a number of irritants are easily available to be triggered off into disputes and even uprisings an unstable political approach to the whole problem has aggravated the resultant conflagrations."

But the government's approach has not undergone any change in the last three decades. It has the same formula: of getting together the leaders of different political parties in a conference to discuss how to tackle the problem. Nehru constituted a national integration council in 1961; Mrs Gandhi has revived the council and has nominated leaders of political parties as its members. But this is not the first time that such an exercise has been done. The council Mrs Gandhi set up in 1971 produced no results.

Leaders talk in a responsible manner at the council's meetings and even the most communal tend to take a secular line. But once they leave the meeting place, they revert to being either Hindu or Muslim; they talk, preach and practise communalism. The report of the top police official rightly says: "The communally minded politicians and the preachers have in reality never left the gullible common citizen alone, whether he be Hindu or Muslim. Seeds of distrust have been planted in the minds of the Muslims while the Hindus have been told that they are unjustly coerced into making extraordinary concessions to the Muslims in economic, social and cultural fields. Exploiting the deep religious traditions of both the communities, differences in their respective religious practices and rituals are highlighted and often it is shown that one is out to destroy the other."

This being the case, any attempt at reconciliation at the superficial level is difficult. The change has to be effected in politicians themselves. They are the ones behind the riots, but I do not know of a single case where a politician has been brought to book.

In Jamshedpur, the Bihar Military Police (a misnomer, as actually they are just a special police force and not part of military) were found by the army to be an active participant in the riot on the side of Hindus. What action has been taken? The government's tendency is to cover up unpleasant facts for fear of repercussions. Take the Biharsharif riots. Mrs Gandhi exonerated the state government within 24 hours of the trouble. After her airdash to the riot-affected areas, she said in reply to a question, whether there had been a failure on the part of the government, "This is not true." How could she give a clear chit to the authorities after a conducted tour that did not last for more than a couple of hours?

Again the politician in her seemed to have got the better of her; it was more important to exonerate the government led by her party than to find out who was to blame.

The administration's failure apart, what is happening is that a massive cleavage is developing between the two communities on the issue of procuring a slice as large as possible of the economic cake, the smallness of which, even after three decades of planning, is a hard reality. Intolerable inflation in urban areas, steadily diminishing job opportunities, the irrational distribution of land in the countryside, the total change in the complexion of traditional cottage industries like shoemaking etc., have impoverished the common man, both Hindu and Muslim. These developments have accumulated economic power in the hands of a few people whose achievements are not always due to qualities of vision or hard work.

The report has also a similar point to make: "Those who have grabbed economic power due to political connections have sought to consolidate and expand their economic gains, and in this process they have not hesitated to whip up communal frenzy resulting in large-scale destruction of property and the migration of people from one area to another. Adventurism can succeed best only in chaos and confusion, and the political and economic adventurer knows that the best form of confusion, instability, and panic can be generated only by a communal riot."

The report has also falsified the general impression that communal riots take place only in those areas where the Muslims are in a majority. It says: "Communal riots have occurred in places where there is a sizeable Muslim population, say between 20 and 25 per cent of the total population, and this population is subjected to a lot of propaganda by the *mullahs* and other preachers of their community. Correspondingly in such places with sizeable Muslim population, the fear of the Hindus that they would be overwhelmed and subdued by the Muslims, is constantly fanned by Hindu communalists into a panic. The unscrupulous Hindu politician interprets every policy and action of the government and local administration, as an appeasement of the Muslim, for the sake of their votes. Thus panic born out of distrust and fed on mischievous propaganda drives the Hindu to protect himself against what he perceives as Muslim expansionism. The Muslim on the other hand lives in constant fear of Hindu domination. Thus fear, distrust, and suspicion between the two communities is the real cause for communal disharmony."

COVER STORY

Nargis

The rare flower

Anil Saari pays a tribute

Nargis and Motilal in [illegible]

"Born in the film industry, she yet was a completely normal person and totally unlike film people."

"Where other heroines would spend time and money on make-up and saris, she would spend her time and money on other things, like the Ajanta Arts Stage Troupe or on her work with handicapped children."

"She had so many good points I don't know what to say. What I liked best about her, you ask? I would say that the best thing about *didi* was that she was an unassuming person. She never felt she was an important personality, even when she was a big star; the aura and distance that surround a star were never there. She was so unassuming that when people met her for the first time they would be shocked by it.

"Her nature was that she would say whatever she felt, straightaway. But with no malice. She could tell a person to his face 'What nonsense!' and scold him, but the very next moment she would forget about it, because she would bear no grudges, she would not intrigue against anyone."

"She knew how to be youthful in the company of the young and how to be very sober among elderly people."

"She was a very strict person with us (her three nieces). We were scared out of our wits by her. We never had a *filmi* atmosphere at home. Because she was very successful without being superficial in her lifestyle, she never felt that the artificial *filmi* atmosphere was necessary. We weren't allowed to attend any parties held at our house. Only at one party, when the Russians who had worked in *Pardesi* came to our house, were we allowed to come and meet them. For ten minutes! After that we were sent off."

"She was basically fond of children, even before her marriage. She was very fond of her nephews and nieces."

"Whenever I needed her she was there. If I was in a troubled state, I never had to call her or tell her about it. She used to know and would be the first person to come."

"If a stranger came to the house and asked for help, *didi* would immediately give whatever she had on her hands at that time. Nobody who came to her for help was ever refused it."

"When my father died, she flew over to Delhi by the earliest flight. I did not expect her nor can I understand how she found my address. I had never told Dutt *saheb* where I lived."

"Shortly after my marriage she once scolded me: *Ullu ke patthey* she shouted at me. My wife, you know, told her that she should not abuse me and Mrs Dutt turned around and ticked my wife off. Who are you to tell me not to scold him? You have met him only a few months ago, I have brought him up like my brother!"

"Mrs Dutt would so often visit us. She would just drop in at our place, she would often visit her friends, just drop in casually to spend a couple of hours."

"She said she had always wanted to be a doctor, so in a way that is really why she got into social work, specially helping the handicapped; that is really why she got into it whole heartedly. She did not diffuse her energies by becoming a member of many committees. There were no halfway methods with her. She threw herself completely into the movement to help spastics. She has, in some ways, pioneered the movement to care for spastic children in India."

Nor was there any halfway response possible to her. All those who came in contact with Nargis Sunil Dutt, fell under her spell and remained her admirers for the rest of their lives. She was always like that, from the age of four when she forced Aminabai, the wife of her mother's driver, to become her nurse and lifelong friend. "In our families," Aminabai told SUNDAY shortly after the *chautha* ceremony was over on 5 May 1981, "women do not work. But the child insisted that she wanted me to be with her, she used to play with my child who was her age. So my husband said, do it for the sake of the child. Since then we have been like members of the family. When she got married I was told that I should not work any more but retire. So I live here like one of the household. I sit under this tree (at the entrance to the front hall of the Dutt bungalow). I have always worn

Nargis in Aah

"No, she did not die a happy soul"

Sunil Dutt remembers his battle to save Nargis

"No, I don't think she died a happy soul. She did not want to die. That is why she suffered through her illness for so long," Sunil Dutt, sitting under the *gulmohar* tree in front of his Pali Hill bungalow, told SUNDAY on 6 May. "There were five or six occasions when doctors had given up hope and said it was impossible to save her. But she did not succumb because she did not want to die. She had not realised any of her ambitions: she wanted to see her son's career become successful, the marriage of her daughter. She did not get to see any of these things. During all the months that she was ill, all she would discuss were things concerning her children: what they were doing and what she had to tell them.

Sunil Dutt, according to Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, had the most decisive influence on the personality of Nargis. As he said, "I think under Mr Sunil Dutt's influence she matured, became more restrained, more considerate, more socially conscious and a wiser person. I don't know Sunil Dutt so well but I have the greatest respect for him and this respect reached its peak during her illness. The devotion and dedication with which he cared for her is tremendous. I heard that for one month, while she was in hospital in the USA, he did not have a bath or change his clothes because he did not want to leave her side. As a result he developed sores on his back and the doctors had to take care of his health."

Today, Sunil Dutt is inconsolable. "I know people say these things, that we did everything we were capable of to nurse her back to health. But what have we gained out of this? We have lost her," he said, with tears in his eyes. "When everything is over I want to thank all the people who have expressed their sympathy and their support, who sent messages of goodwill during the crisis. I mean all the people whom we don't know personally. One day I would like to thank them somehow—through the press or any other media."

Nothing illustrates Sunil Dutt's magnanimity of spirit, or his intensely humane personality better than the episode which took place on the evening of Sunday, 3 May, when Sunil Dutt and his children returned after burying Nargis at the Sonapur burial ground. Returning home, he found the parents of a 20-year-old boy waiting for him. Their son had leukaemia (cancer of the blood), they told him and since modern medicine is now proving effective in curing leukaemia among the young, the boy's parents asked Sunil Dutt if they could have their son examined by the two American doctors who had flown in four hours before Nargis's death, at 7.30 am, on 3 May. Sunil Dutt immediately called up the two doctors, but by then they had left for the USA.

One of Sunil Dutt's closest friends, Shammi Kapoor, best expressed the response of the Indian people to Sunil Dutt's relationship with Nargis: "It can only be a *mahan atma* (great soul) who is capable of such dedication, who is capable of such patience during a crisis. He put everything at stake to look after the woman he loved—his career, his son's career—and became involved in single-mindedly looking after his wife. It requires a fantastic amount of confidence in a person to not wilt in the face of a crisis such as the one Sunil has faced. He did it in a spirit and with a perseverance that you cannot easily find among men."

It was during the period of Nargis's prolonged illness, Sunil Dutt realised, more than ever before, how much he loved his wife. This he admitted to an associate after he returned to India from New York on the night of 5 March. And now, in spite of all the strength he has shown during the crisis, he finds it impossible to accept that his wife is no more. He remains unmoved when his close friends try to console him by saying *"pehle do jism the aur ek rooh, ab ek hi jism hai aur ek hi rooh* (earlier there were two bodies and one spirit, now there is the same one spirit but in one body)."

Though he holds back his tears in front of visitors who come to mourn Nargis's death, he bursts into tears once he is alone. As a matter of fact, during the first three days of mourning neither Sunil Dutt nor his children could bring themselves to eat and had to be forced into having food at irregular intervals by their close associates.

"Ajeeb khel khelta hai Khuda mere saath (God plays strange games with me)," Sunil Dutt had told lyricist Anand Bakshi a few days before Nargis's death. "Out of twelve months in a year, he gives me an incredible amount of happiness for three months and then in the next nine months he snatches all of it away. When I met Jimmy Carter in 1977, when we were invited to attend his inauguration, everybody in India knew about it and we were feeling on the top of the world. During those very days my mother became ill and fell into a coma. We rushed back from the US to look after her in this very hospital." And now, four years later, he has been confronted with an equally painful wound.

the clothes she gave me. Everything that I have is due to them. She has always looked after us, that is all I have to say. Even today it is the same with Dutt *saheb* and the children. When my husband died she supervised all the arrangements. When my daughter died, Baby (as Aminabai was to call Nargis till the very end) came to me and said that I still have another daughter to look after me."

Was she mischievous and naughty as a child, I asked Aminabai.

And Aminabai's eyes sparkled, she gave a low laugh and said, "No, she wasn't a mischievous child at all."

Was she an obstinate child? You know, forcing you to become her *ayah*?

"No, she wasn't *ziddi* (obstinate). She would listen," and Aminabai laughed, yet simultaneously the nostalgia of the years gone by brought a sudden burst of tears into her eyes. Aminabai's Baby Rani was no more.

Miracles do not happen, specially when you most want them to. For ten months Nargis's family, her friends, associates and her fans—who range from 20-year-olds to 80-year-olds—knew that she would not survive the painful affliction of cancer of the pancreas. She was operated upon time and again but could hold on to her strength to fulfil one last ambition—see her son Sunjay launched on a successful film career with *Rocky*; she died a few days before the premiere. Yet when it came to pass, it became impossible to accept the fact that the fragrance of Nargis had gone out of this world for ever. Both those who knew her personally and those who only knew her as an undefinably charming presence on the silver screen will find it difficult to accept that she is no longer there in flesh and blood but now simply a memory that refuses to recede into the background. For, in a sense, both as a film actress and in real life, Nargis was beyond us. She was instinctively what we could never aspire to become ourselves, but what we could not help but admire and love.

Nargis in Awara

Even when she flaunted her superficial opinions about poverty and Satyajit Ray's films, that absurd remark seemed so untypical of Nargis, both the woman and the actress. Perhaps she said that only to express one point of view in a 12-year-old battle between the commercial and art filmmakers. Perhaps it was no more than one more angry outburst from an impatient Nargis who was tired of hearing that the popular Hindi film was no film at all for the intellectuals whose movies could never move the Indian masses, or give them some relief from the sordid machinations of a poverty-ridden, degenerate socio-economic system.

What made her most exceptional in our age and land is that unlike most of us, she was not in the least selfish. She knew no bounds when it came to generosity, to helping people, and she asked for so little from the world. She was content to be at the centre of her

A still from Awara

Nargis and Mrs Gandhi

SHYAM AURANGABADKE

Nargis with Mrs Gandhi

Nargis's association and friendship with Mrs Indira Gandhi was a natural development to the actress's childhood fascination for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru himself was not insensitive to the fact that Nargis was a completely different person from the average filmstar, and he was generous enough to spare the odd hour to his talented admirer and fan. As a patron of the arts, Nehru gradually gave his approval to the family links between his own family members and the Sunil Dutts. Nargis's association with Mrs Indira Gandhi, when both of them were young women involved intensely in their respective pursuits, gradually developed over the years into a clear personal commitment to the Nehru family by Nargis Dutt, her husband and her children. Nargis's desire to work among those sections of society who needed help gave a quasi-political dimension to her attitude to Mrs Gandhi. Never known to be overtly political in her thinking or beliefs, Nargis became a social worker who became an active member of Mrs Gandhi's supporters.

For the Dutts, their commitment to the Nehru family stemmed from a very strong admiration for both Nehru and Mrs Gandhi. I remember meeting Sunil Dutt one morning at New Delhi in 1977. He was on his way to place an advertisement in *The Indian Express* in which Nargis and he were to express their trust in Mrs Gandhi's leadership. This was just before the 1977 Lok Sabha elections, and the election campaign was at its feverish peak. When I commented that Mrs Gandhi's party was bound to lose the 1977 elections, Sunil Dutt turned sharply and declared, "One does not lose one's faith in Mrs Gandhi's leadership just because she is, in your words, a little unpopular at the moment!"

During the 1977 Lok Sabha elections and later in 1980, Nargis and her husband worked actively for Mrs Gandhi's candidates in Bombay. Nargis went into the working-class areas and into slums to canvass. Sources within the Bombay film industry also say that for the 1980 Lok Sabha elections it was Nargis who organised support for Mrs Gandhi in the film world.

It was after the 1977 Lok Sabha elections, when Mrs Gandhi was temporarily out of power, that a strong personal link between her and Nargis really developed. The Dutts, who have inspired so many local friends themselves, won special affection from Mrs Gandhi for their faith in her. Nargis's nomination to the Rajya Sabha in 1980 was, therefore, recognition both of Nargis's contributions to Indian cinema, and in the field of social work, and of her political consistency.

Earlier, in 1972, it was Mrs Gandhi who first involved Nargis in what was to become her primary interest outside her family—the care of spastic children. Mrs Mithu Alur (formerly Chib) met Mrs Gandhi in 1972 to ask for her help in setting up The Spastics Society of India. Following this interview, the Prime Minister's secretariat gave Mrs Alur the names of 15 prominent citizens in Bombay whose help Mrs Alur could seek. Nargis and Sunil Dutt's names were in that list. Nargis was to become immediately involved with the Spastics Society and as the years went by this became her most important concern.

Nargis first met Nehru shortly after independence. When Nehru visited Bombay, the governor gave a reception. Nargis's brother Akhtar Hussain received a card to attend the reception along with his wife. His wife being a simple village woman, Akhtar Hussain was persuaded by his mother to take the 19-year-old Nargis. Nargis was thrilled: one of her biggest ambitions at that time was to take Nehru's autograph. When brother and sister arrived at the governor's house they discovered they were the only film people present. Nehru probably knew about Nargis, and when she was introduced to him he shook hands with her and told her he was happy to meet her. A photographer-friend of the family clicked that moment, and the next day some Bombay newspapers carried the photograph with big caption: Nargis meets Nehru.

The publication of the photograph initiated a completely different episode. Apparently the invitation to Akhtar Hussain the film actor had been meant for Akhtar Hussain a local MLA and had been wrongly delivered. One newspaper even carried a critical report the following day, asking how Nargis had manoeuvered an invitation to the reception when nobody else in the film industry had been invited! The whole thing became a fairly serious scandal in Bombay and the state government ordered a police inquiry to find out how Nargis had got into the governor's reception!

family, almost totally devoted to her three beautiful children. She was thrilled when her husband would fast with her as she kept the ritual *karvachauth.* Above all she was playful, full of energy and enthusiasm even at the age of 51. Nothing could hold her back. Life had dealt her many kinds of blows but Nargis never wilted. Twice the family lost all their money, but they were too proud to beg, and too talented not to carve out a fortune once again. And each time they failed at attempting something new and different, they would be inspired by yet another challenge—and make it work.

She helped Sunil Dutt to make the first documentary-oriented feature film on the Chambal dacoits, *Mujhe Jeene Do.* Despite Waheeda Rehman and superb music, it flopped at the box office because it refused to glorify and sentimentalise violence. Thereafter Mr and Mrs Sunil Dutt decided to produce *Yaadein,* an experimental film in black and white, with only one actor in the cast and without songs, dances or other formula ingredients of any kind. It was a worse flop than *Mujhe Jeene Do.* In the years after that the couple were tempted, by close friends like the late Capt. V. R. Mohan, of the Mohan Meakins brewery and distillery group, to set up north India's first film studio, (Lahore had, of course, become part of Pakistan). The Dutts decided upon a site at Ghaziabad, off Delhi. They invested a considerable sum of money and time on the project but their proposal became a victim of the intense political rivalry between Charan Singh and C. B. Gupta. The UP government, when C. B. Gupta was the chief minister in the mid-Sixties, agreed to give the required land in Ghaziabad district at a concessional rate. Before the land could be acquired, there was a change of government and Charan Singh, as the leader of a coalition, became chief minister in 1967. One of the first schemes of the previous government that the Charan Singh ministry squashed was the plan to help set up the Ajanta Film Studio at Ghaziabad.

That was quite a setback for the Dutts and it took them some time to return to active film making. But their next venture, *Reshma Aur Shera,* once again tried to defy the accepted formulas of the box office and brought in another burden of debts. After *Reshma Aur Shera* put him down for some Rs 40 lakhs, Sunil Dutt joked when he first came to Bombay that he did not have 40 paise for a cup of tea and now he was associated with the sum of 40 lakhs. But it was the last time that Sunil Dutt was to produce and direct a serious, intellectually conceived, film. He went on to make *Man Ka Meet* and other formula films. Nargis moved away from the film world and spent more and more of her time in social work. The Dutts seemed to have decided that while the man of the house would bring in the bread, his better half would devote herself to social

SHYAM AURANGABADKE

Nargis with Dilip Kumar

Nargis with Madhumati and Uttam Kumar

Nargis and Mujibur Rehman

Towards the end of January 1972, shortly after the birth of Bangladesh, Nargis and Sunil Dutt took the Ajanta Arts Stage Troupe to entertain Indian defence personnel temporarily stationed there.

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was an international name at the time and the troupe made sure that they met him at Dacca. Ushered into his presence at the Prime Minister's house, Nargis was surprised when the Sheikh told her that he had met her earlier though she would not remember it.

It was in 1952, when Nargis was returning with Indian film delegation from the USA. At a changeover in Europe, while they were waiting in the transit lounge of the airport, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman also happened to be there. He came over to the Indian film delegation, asked Nargis for her autograph and had a cup of tea with the stars. Twenty years later he still remembered that cup of tea. And when Nargis heard about it she was thrilled.

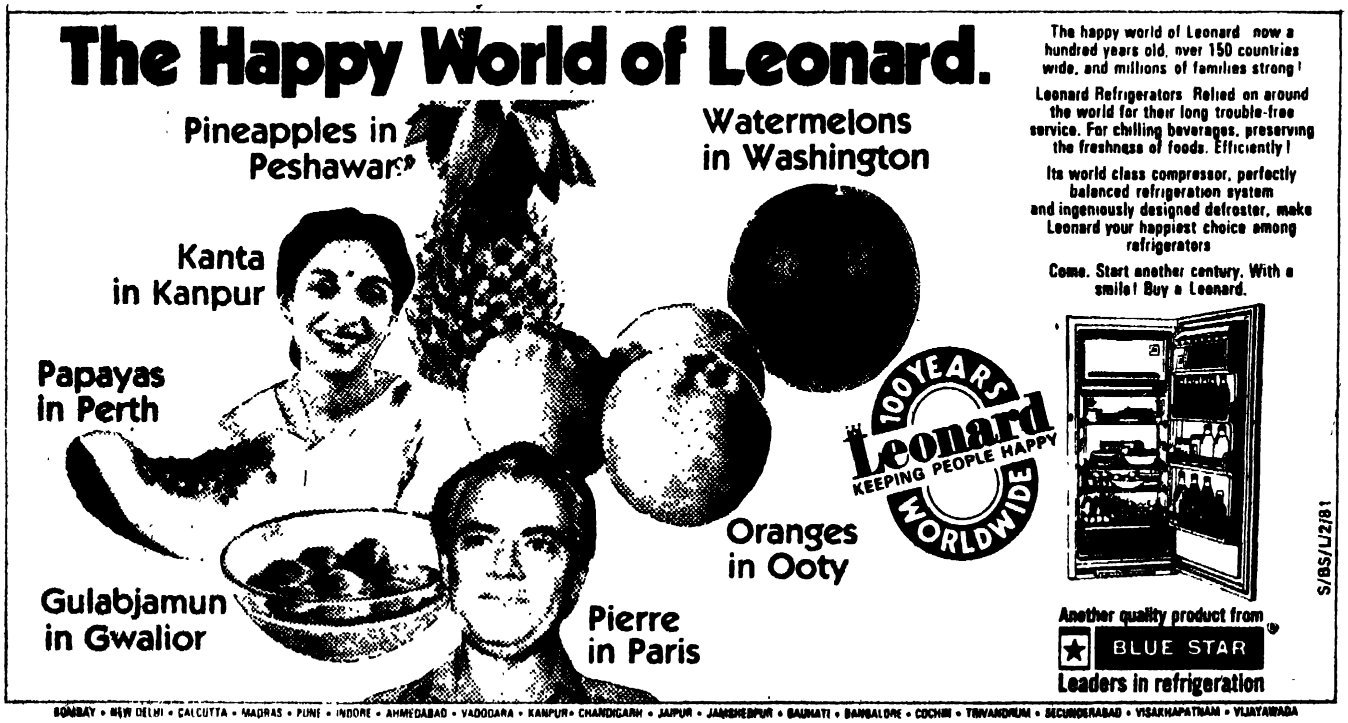
causes, to raise funds and organise institutions for the needy. So began Nargis's weekly journeys into the Bombay slums.

One of the most popular film stars of the Fifties already knew what the Bombay slums were like. Nargis had never really been blind to them even during the years of fame and glory under the arc lights and the huge, cannibalistic movie-cameras. She had very special friends within the film industry. Like Vithal the tailor who stitched her costumes. From time to time he would go over to the Marine Drive flat in Chateau Marine next to Hotel Nataraj, where Nargis lived before her marriage to Sunil Dutt, and invite her to lunch at his house. Nargis's nieces, who accompanied her on these visits, would scream and shout in protest, "*Kya Pappoo! Kya Vithal ke yahan khana milega* (What are you doing, Papoo aunty! What kind of food would we get at Vithal's)!" But Nargis would scold them and bundle them all up in a car and drive down to the old tailor's dingy room. There she would sit on the floor, gossip in Marathi with Vithal's wife, play with his young children and always leave a little present behind.

There was a spontaneity to Nargis's personality that defied the superficial values of status symbols and class divisions. In her youth she was an impulsive person and did not really care for her film star image. Some years back, stuck withtout a car at Sunil Dutt's production office, she decided to go home in a taxi. For some reason or the other there was no taxi to be found and Nargis decided to walk the one and a half miles to their Pali Hill house. Accompanied by Sunil Dutt's protege, Raj Grover, eating salted peanuts on the way, Nargis strolled across Bandra as people turned and stared and shouted after her.

Street food was something Nargis was really fond of, and to Sunil Dutt's dismay she would stop and eat anywhere, unbothered whether the food was officially "hygienic" or not. She was also fond of slang and *ullu ka pattha* was almost always at the tip of her tongue when was in the family circle. At home she could create almost as much, if not more, of a racket as any of the children. And if Nargis became silent and did not boss around, associates and friends would begin to suspect that she was angry with them.

Nargis was very fond of reading. Khalil Gibran and Marie Corelli were great favourites with her, though she would read all kinds of books avidly. She was also an admirer of the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ali Sardar Jafri and Kaifi Azmi. When Balraj Sahni was alive, she would occasionally go to see a new play put up by IPTA. She



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A *still from* Aah

was also a compulsive filmgoer and, in her younger days, after a fit of temper at the expense of her three nieces, she would make things up by giving them a treat at the movies. Though her mother, Jaddanbai, was one of the most exciting singers of her times, Nargis had almost no talent for music; but she was an avid listener. Popular and light-classical music she was particularly fond of, and liked both Indian and western music. Travelling and shopping were other things that excited Nargis. She was very fond of clothes but would not wear much of the jewellery and trinkets that she loved to buy whenever she had a chance.

In the Dutt household *insaniyat* (humanism) was the religion. Nargis knew more about Hindu festivals than her husband, born a Moypal brahmin. The *Hanuman Chalisa* she knew by heart. There was also a special regard in the house for the 'other religions', and when prayers were held during Nargis's prolonged illness heads bowed to Allah and Ram, Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ. Swami Muktananda was the *sadhu* that the family worships and Nargis would go regularly to the Muktananda Ashram in Vageshwari.

Always known for her enthusiasm, Nargis had, like any other good Samaritan, burnt her fingers too on occasions. Sometimes she would poke her nose into other people's affairs without being asked to, believing that she was helping them. This would sometimes lead to unpleasantness, but in this area she learnt nothing from experience. There were also times when she tried to help people, but paid an unusual price for it: if she did not succeed in getting their work done, she had to suffer the taunt that she had let them down. But she was always willing to go out of her way to help. Particularly after she entered the Rajya Sābha; she was clear in her mind that she was there not only to represent the film industry but also to work on the problems faced by Indian women and by the poor.

Friends in need

Throughout the ten months that Sunil Dutt looked after Nargis, his business affairs were managed by Nargis's nephew Sarwar, general manager of the Dutt's Ajanta Arts company. There was not one occasion during the long stay at New York that Sunil Dutt rang up his Bombay office and did not find Sarwar there.

Other associates who went out of their way to help Sunil Dutt during the crisis were film financier and producer Gulshan Rai, lawyer C. B. Puri and Dr. Puri who works with Air India. Rough estimates of the cost incurred by the family for Nargis's treatment come to approximately Rs 30 lakhs.

A still from Anhonee

‘তিলোত্তমাও পরম রূপবতী, কিন্তু আয়েষার সৌন্দর্য সে রীতির নহে’

“যদি চিত্রকর হইতাম, যদি এইখানে তুলি ধরিতে পারিতাম, যদি সে কপাল তেমনই নিটোল করিয়া আঁকিতে পারিতাম, তাহার উপরে তেমনই সুবঙ্কিম কেশের সীমা-রেখা দিতে পারিতাম ; সে রেখা তেমনই পরিষ্কার, তেমনই কপালের গোলাকৃতির অনুগামিনী করিয়া আকর্ণ টানিতে পারিতাম ; কর্ণের উপরে সে রেখা তেমনই করিয়া ঘুরাইয়া দিতে পারিতাম ; যদি তেমনই কালো রেশমের মত কেশের কথা লিখিতে পারিতাম, কেশ মধ্যে তেমনই করিয়া কপাল হইতে সিঁথি কাটিয়া দিতে পারিতাম—তেমনই পরিষ্কার, তেমনই সুক্ষ্ম ; যদি তেমনই করিয়া কেশ রঞ্জিত করিয়া দিতে পারিতাম ; যদি তেমনই করিয়া লোল কবরী বাঁধিয়া দিতে পারিতাম ;… …”

আবহমানকালের এই 'যদি' ক্রমাগত আমাদের ভাবিয়েছে। যেমন ভাবিয়েছিল সাহিত্য সম্রাট বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রকে আয়েষার রূপ কল্পনার মুহূর্তে।

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The Actress

She wasn't pretty or glamorous at first glance, stunning filmgoers with a dramatic entry or an exotic, out-of-the-world look. Indeed, before she became a superstar with a successful chain of hits (beginning in 1943 with *Taqdeer*, followed by *Kismet*, *Andaz* and *Barsaat*) Nargis was often criticised for having a 'horsey' face. The magic of Nargis was that she was one of the first actresses in the Hindi cinema to underplay her presence on the screen. She never forced herself upon the scene but, with the simplest of expressions, a smile or a nod or a pert comment, she conjured a spontaneity that forced people to concentrate their attention upon her personality.

As an actress she also became one of the most enduring symbols of the modern Indian psyche. Whereas the great film beauties of the time—Soraiya, Nimmi, Shiela Ramani and Nalini Jaywant—faded with the years, only Nargis and Meena Kumari have left memories of an undying dream. If Meena Kumari was the great beauty of the Hindi cinema, Nargis personified all the hopes of modern India. She sailed through the romantic comedies, especially in the films opposite Raj Kapoor, with bobbed hair, bare shoulders and songs in the rain—but always with an air of innocence, a demeanour that wasn't even scratched by the seamy side of life. She was modern yet pure, she was free yet modest, she was charming but also intense; from the screen she conveyed the feeling that she could be both friend and wife. She would bring a lump to the throat as she battled with the screen vamps for the love of her man. If she was vulnerable and fragile in the love stories, she was also beyond breaking in *Mother India*. In her strange amalgam of the delicate and the firm, the romantic and the persevering, Nargis was a child-beauty of the Indian film.

Though old-time film associates hardly saw the vivacious, boisterous, impulsive girl as an intellectual, she would by instinct do the things that could startle the most intellectual of them all. When Shambhu Mitra and Ajay Mitra read out the script of *Jagte Raho* to Nargis and Raj Kapoor it was Nargis who, in K. A. Abbas's words, "reacted very enthusiastically and told Raj Kapoor that it would be a good role for him, and to that extent she was responsible for the making of the picture."

Abbas, who directed her in *Anhonee* for which she won a Filmfare Award, thinks that Nargis's greatest strength was "her sense of timing. She knew when to appear and when to retire on the screen." But Abbas is convinced that despite this talent, Nargis underwent "a conscious struggle to improve herself. Her talent was cultivated, it was not instinctive. It was not as if in her very first picture she was a great artiste."

V. P. Sathe, an old associate of Raj Kapoor who has collaborated with Abbas on the scripts of many popular classics such as *Shri 420*, found on the many occasions that he watched Nargis act that "she had a tremendous understanding of what the scene demanded."

Analysing her working method as an actress, Abbas told us that when Nargis had to play the role of a lady lawyer in *Awara* she went to the courts and studied the mannerisms of the lawyers, observed their ways of arguing and shouting and the gestures they would resort to. Moreover, Abbas added, "she had the great quality of immediately switching off after doing a very dramatic or emotional or powerful sequence. As soon as she came off the sets she would switch off and behave normally."

To her love scenes Nargis brought the same intensity that other leading actresses gave to tragic sequences. In *Awara*, for instance, there is a scene in which Raj Kapoor says *"Agar kishti doob jayegi to"* (if our boat sinks) and Nargis shoots back *"Doob janedo"* (let it sink). That expression, remembers Sathe, conveys everything. That is the intensity of her expressive powers, "that is what made Raj Kapoor and Nargis such a popular romantic team." It was an intensity of feeling that made it possible for her to convince the audience of the time that the only appropriate climax to *Mother India* was that the honest mother should kill her dacoit son. It was a twist that broke so many taboos of the popular Indian film syndrome in 1957.

From the very beginning Nargis never fumbled in front of the camera, and she never had to give many retakes. She was lucky in having two of the best showmen-directors to work with—Mehboob and Raj Kapoor. They gave her the time to develop her characterisation and they took a lot of care in filming her performance in order to present her at her best On her part, Nargis never troubled any of her directors.

Nargis started her career in her mother Jaddanbai's production *Talaash-e-Haq* in which brother Akhtar Hussain was the hero. Known as Baby Rani, then and for most of her working life, Nargis made a brief appearance in a courtroom scene, bringing a packet to the judge and telling him that this was the poison that the film's villain intended to use.

Nargis was five years old. About the time she turned 13, Mehboob forced Jaddanbai to let Nargis work in his film *Taqdeer*.

She never wanted to be an actress and neither did her family. At 13 Nargis had ambitions of becoming a doctor and did not know anything about acting. It was Firduljee, Mehboob's ace-cameraman and a family friend of Jaddanbai's household, who persuaded Mehboob to test Nargis for *Taqdeer*. Akhtar Hussain recalls how Mehboob insisted on taking 'Baby' for a screen-test. "They were gone for many hours and we began to wonder what kind of a screen test Mehboob was subjecting her to. At the end of a long day he came back to our house and declared that Baby was working in his film, and that was that. In *Taqdeer* Nargis was the single girl opposite three great favourites of the day—Motilal who was the star actor in Bombay at that time, Chandra Mohan, and the comic star Charlie. But the story was about the character played by the 13-year-old girl and not about the big three male stars, and Nargis proved then and there that she could carry, dominate and sustain a film. It was in the fitness of things that she also retired from cinema in a Mehboob film. Her appearance in *Mother India* won her the first Urvashi Award, the national film award for the best actress, in 1958. The same year she won the best actress award at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival. And having played *Mother India* she felt that it would be incongruous for her to work in any other film. At the very peak of her working life she also realized the greatest of her dreams—marriage and the chance to set up her own house and have children.

In the 23 years of her retirement from films, many producers wanted to tempt her back to the studio lights but she was firm about never coming back. The most famous of these attempts to make Nargis come back involves S. S. Vasan, the movie mughal who ran Gemini Studios at Madras. For the first time in his life, Vasan flew down to Bombay to sign a star for a Gemini film. He told Nargis that he had a story which he would film only if she agreed to act in it and that if she said no he would never make the film. You quote your price, here is the chequebook, you fill in the amount, Vasan is reported to have told Nargis. She laughed at the offer and to tease Vasan mentioned a sum that was five times the price Dilip Kumar then took for a film. Will you give me that much to act in your film, Nargis asked Vasan. "That", replied Vasan, referring to the sum Nargis had mentioned, "is also an 'amount' and I have told you to fill in any amount you want!" Not to be outdone, Nargis apologised and said that she was already busy working in three films. "Those films are Sunjay, Anju and Priya" her children, and, therefore, she was too busy to work in Vasan's film.

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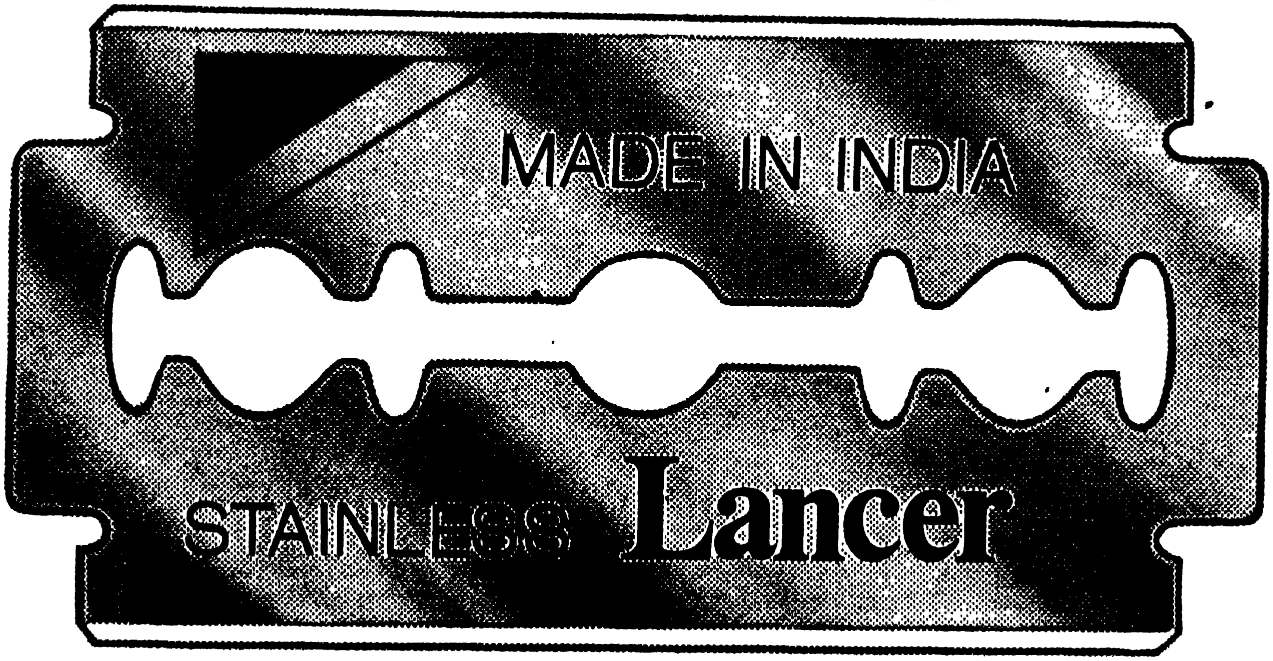

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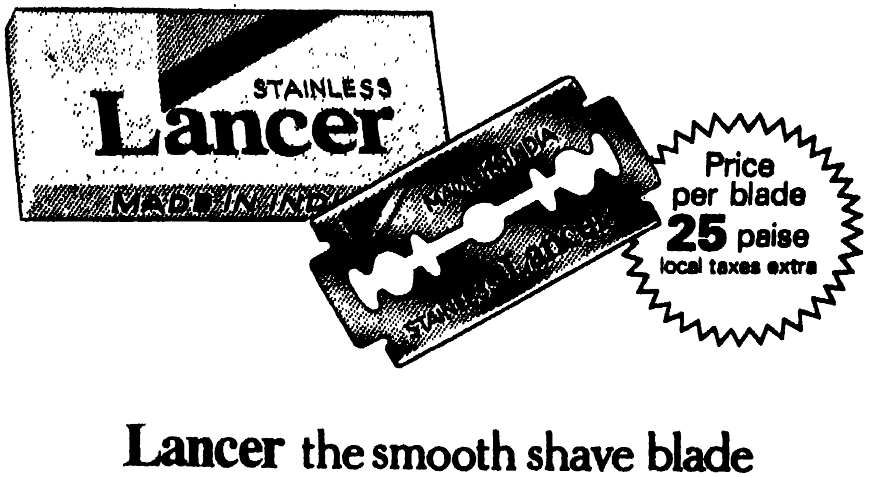

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The Nargis-Sunil Love Story

By Krishna

SHYAM AURANGABADKE

Nargis and Sunil Dutt

Destiny played a big hand in Nargis's marriage to Sunil Dutt. Nargis had become a popular film star long before Sunil Dutt came into films. An ardent admirer of hers, like so many others, he first met Nargis when he went to interview her for a radio programme. Later, fortune was to co-star them in Mehboob's *Mother India* and was to save her life when her clothes caught fire while on location shooting.

On the night that the two married in 1958, destiny almost turned cruel. Nargis was supposed to meet Sunil Dutt at Linking Road, near the Arya Samaj in Santa Cruz, at 7 pm. Reminiscing about her marriage Nargis told me a couple of years ago that she had told her relatives (her elder brother Akhtar Hussain and his wife) that she was going to visit a friend's place. At Linking Road, Sunil waited and waited but there was no sign of Nargis till ten o'clock. What had happened to her? Had she changed her mind?

Sunil could not even leave his post to telephone Nargis's house and find out. Suppose she came to Arya Samaj while he had gone to telephone? She would go back thinking that Sunil had ditched her!

Sunil stuck to his post. But what had happened to Nargis? She was in a taxi which had been caught in the worst traffic jam Bombay had ever experienced. The Pope was in the city for the Eucharistic Congress. Nargis, as she told me, dared not leave the taxi to locate a telephone because the taxi driver would not have been able to park in that jam.

Nargis was hours late, but the marriage took place. The first thing they did was to call on Akhtar Hussain, Nargis's elder brother. He wouldn't open the door since she had married a Hindu and that too without telling anyone at home Eventually her relatives became reconciled to her marital status.

Once married, Nargis stuck to her domestic chores. Later she devoted a great deal of time to social work. Then disaster struck Sunil. He became bankrupt after *Reshma Aur Shera* flopped miserably.

Disaster not just because it flopped. His own colleagues, whom he had trusted now cheated him right, left and centre. And Sunil refused Nargis's offer to return to the screen so that she could help financially. It took years for Sunil to recover and rehabilitate himself financially, which could not have been easy for him without the woman who stood by him through thick and thin.

Sunil Dutt rose to the occasion when Nargis was dying. He literally gambled the last shirt on his back to bring her home alive from the United States where she had been taken for medical treatment. At one stage, the doctors in the hospital gave up hope, and told Sunil so. The first operation took nearly 14 hours and throughout that period Sunil stood at the locked door of the operation theatre, praying and praying. It is no exaggeration, to quote a friend of mine who was present at the hospital, that "Sunil never left that door even for a second—no drink, no food..."

Days after the operation Nargis began bleeding. Only one more operation could help stop the bleeding. The doctors were hesitant, and they told Sunil, "It is hopeless. Why don't you let her die in peace?" Sunil wouldn't agree and signed the normal guarantee of responsibility. For a moment he felt he was "signing her death warrant." The doctors responded to Sunil's faith and did a marvellous job. After the operation the bleeding stopped, though the doctors had no hope of her surviving even for a while.

Weeks passed and Nargis remained in hospital, living with the aid of tubes. The expense was staggering but Sunil did not worry about that; all he wanted was to bring her home alive: "I believe in God. If I do not take her home alive, then I will conclude there is no God." God came to his rescue. Air India made special flight arrangements to fly Nargis to India when the American doctors certified her fit to travel.

Nargis relapsed often into coma in the last two months; the Indian doctors too were not hopeful of a complete recovery. Two days before she died, the doctors warned Sunil about the dangerous deterioration.

Her last wish was to see her son Sunjay's picture *Rocky* released. Unfortunately, the release date was postponed thrice and she kept asking "what's happening?" She did not believe that the release was postponed due to trade problems, but that *Rocky* had flopped and they didn't want to tell her about it. This, one must feel, hastened her death. Producer Amarjeet was planning a quiet release without any premiere *hungama* in reverence to Nargis's health, but she insisted that "this being Sunju's first picture, you must have a gala premiere. The show must go on."

Believe it or not, even after her death, Nargis showed her 'reluctance' to leave her home and those in it. Her body was brought down and kept on the lawns of the bungalow. But the coffin would not go into the ambulance. Another ambulance was brought and the body was taken out of the gate. But the coffin wouldn't fit into the second ambulance either, and finally a third ambulance had to be brought.

At the bungalow were present *mullahs* and *dastoors* and *pundits* because Nargis had expressed a wish to have the funeral rites performed by all religions. But she wanted to be buried by the side of her mother Jaddanbai.

A Family Woman

Nargis with her family

SHYAM AURANGABADKE

Some years back the ministry of information and broadcasting asked Nargis to be the chairman of the feature film jury for the national film awards. This chairmanship is the most prestigious position that the Indian government can offer to a film luminary. Not unexpectedly, Nargis refused to accept the chairmanship. Later that year she told this correspondent that she had refused because the jury was to sit in June that year and she was not free in June; when her son Sunjay would be home on vacation from his school at Sanavar. School holidays were devoted wholly to the children and every other interest in Nargis's life receded into the background once the schools closed.

Nargis had no qualms about spoiling Sunjay. If news came from Sanavar that he had hurt himself or suffered a bruise, her first instinct was to catch the flight northwards. She was a little partial to her only son but even close friends could not complain that this was at any cost to her two daughters, Namrata (known at home as Anju) who is 17 now. three years younger then her brother, and 13-year-old Priya. They always accompanied her wherever she went.

During the last year of her life, even when she was ill, Nargis was as concerned about finding a good wife for Sunjay as she was about his career. There was a family joke that she loved her son so much that she could not say no to him on anything, not even Tina with whom Sunjay is in love.

Now that she is gone the responsibility of running the house is being assumed by her daughter Namrata, a girl who is much more mature than her years would warrant. For instance, before the three children flew to New York last year to be by her side at the Sloan-Kettering Hospital, Namrata went to the Ajanta Arts office (Sunil Dutt's film production headquarters) and told people there that they must see to it that the family servants had no problems while the Dutt family members were away, and that the same food was cooked for the servants that they would eat while the family was at home.

According to Shammi, Nargis's friend for thirty years, "she was a complete housewife. There was nothing in the house she did not know about or see to herself. She was a very good cook and often cooked special dishes for the family."

As a wife she gave all her love to her husband and in turn he loved her equally. There was a curious formality in public between husband and wife. He always referred to her as Mrs Nargis and she always called him Dutt *saheb* in front of other people. However, they would often tease and rib each other. Sunil Dutt disliked her addiction for *paan* and Nargis would eat *paan* on the sly. A favourite butt of his jokes was Nargis's many friends and he would jibe that they were the *dahej* (dowry) she had brought with her. Another Nargis weakness that Sunil Dutt would get mad about was her inordinate love for shopping, though she never wore much jewellery or trinkets herself. Returning from Chittagong in 1972 after the Ajanta Arts Cultural Troupe had gone on a tour to entertain Indian soldiers who had fought for the liberation of Bangladesh, Sunil Dutt discovered that Nargis had not reached the airport in time. She must have gone shopping, he exclaimed, and refused to travel in the same plane with her on the troupe's flight back to Calcutta.

Among his closest friends, Sunil Dutt often made jokes about being a henpecked husband. But one day Raaj Grover, who has been Sunil's right-hand man for some 20 years, discovered that this was not quite true. When Grover arrived at the Dutt household one day he discovered Nargis shouting at the top of her voice, complaining away that Sunil was neglecting her and that she would not stay locked at home any more! *"Mujhe samaj kya rakhha hai inhoney! Dekhte hain unki baat maani jaayegi is ghar mein yah main rahongi yahan!"* (What does he think I am! I'll see if his writ runs in the house or whether I stay in this house!)

However, when Sunil Dutt came home for a little while that day, in between two tightly scheduled shooting-stints, Grover discovered that the anger simply had left Nargis. She went up meekly to him and asked softly whether he would eat at home or should she pack his lunch for him to take away to the studio. "She said it with so much affection," "Grover told SUNDAY, that after that we never joked with Dutt *saheb* that he was henpecked."

Nargis's friend Shammi confirms this: "Most decisions in the family were Dutt *saheb's*. He was the man of the house and there were no two questions about it. She was a very subdued wife. Very very submissive to her husband and she loved him very very much." Indeed, Nargis had so much to give both to her husband and her children that she never felt she had done enough. Apart from looking after the children's daily needs, she would spend every evening supervising their homework while they studied at Bombay. Another close associate of the family, Manohar Deepak, recalls how Nargis used to teach little Priya many years ago. Every time that Nargis asked Priya to spell 'comb' Priya would begin writing it with a 'b', Nargis would howl in anger. She was a strict teacher and wanted her children to be perfect.

Nargis and Raj Kapoor

Raj Kapoor and Nargis in **Shri 420**

Raj Kapoor first met Nargis as a film producer-director wanting to cast a rising star in his first film. The film was *Aag* and Raj Kapoor needed three actresses for major roles. By that time Nargis had already acted in eight or nine films and was an established star. Nargis, Kamini Kaushal and Nigar were the three actresses Raj Kapoor cast in *Aag*. Of them it was Nargis alone who, in film jargon, was considered a selling point. And Raj Kapoor had yet to establish himself as a film hero.

Raj Kapoor went to Jaddanbai's house to ask for her consent to let Nargis work with him. According to Nargis's brother Akhtar Hussain, the mother told Nargis that Prithviraj Kapoor's son was making his first film and should be helped. Nargis's career was managed by her mother and later, after Jaddanbai's death, by her elder brother Akhtar Hussain who was both a producer and a film hero. Jaddanbai herself had produced many films starring herself and, later, Nargis.

With *Aag* began one of the most successful creative teams in Hindi cinema. Nargis and Raj Kapoor not only became a popular pair; her role in helping Raj Kapoor to establish and run R. K. Studios was extraordinary. Though *Aag* was not a box-office hit, their second film *Barsaat* was a blockbuster and became the first of a series of popular classics to come out of R. K. Studios. It was an association that lasted till *Jagte Raho*, the last film they made together. Though Nargis had no role in the film she appeared for a fleeting moment in a passing scene. Moreover, she was quite involved with the film's production.

Raj Kapoor was never to achieve the same level of artistic and social sensitivity in the films he made after he and Nargis decided to break their friendship. Nargis was the perfect foil to his personality. Where he was an expert showman, she was totally homely and without any *filmi* frills at all. Whereas he gloried in his increasing power, she remained most unselfconscious even at the prime of her career. In their most successful films—*Barsaat, Awara, Shri 420*—she always played an ordinary, simple woman that she never was in real life, having got enmeshed in film acting from the adolescent age of 13, and Raj Kapoor was always the poor, down-and-out vagabond that Raj Kapoor has never really been in real life. As artistes they inspired each other's fantasies, about themselves, creating on the screen the people these two could never actually become.

For Nargis her friendship with Raj Kapoor was also an escape into a free world. During her prime she was the mainstay of her family and in Raj Kapoor she found a Prince Charming who freed her from the mundane responsibilities of life, introduced her to intellectuals, writers and artists whose ideas would dazzle Nargis and inspire her in a hundred thousand ways. Because Raj Kapoor had a fascination for white, Nargis in her girlish enthusiasm began to dress only in white.

And when she closed that chapter of her life she gave up, more or less, white dresses too. Raj Kapoor could only be her partner; he could never be her husband, and above all she wanted to be a wife, a mother and a simple family woman. Perhaps she did not even want to work for herself, as for all her life she had worked for others: her brothers, Raj Kapoor and later for the many causes she undertook as a social worker.

At R. K. Studios Nargis would take a lot of interest in the studio's daily grind. She was a special favourite of the lower-paid studio staff and knew all of them by name—the sweepers, the *coolis*, the carpenters, the light-boys and the like. All of them, according to K. A. Abbas, would come to her with their demands and their complaints. She was like an elder sister to the whole studio and with them she shared a great inner dignity. Years later, the Dutts and the Kapoors could meet again as two families headed by men who had the greatest respect for each other.

Even today the image of Nargis is part of the R. K. Studio logo in which a young man stands with a violin in one hand, holding on to a young girl with the other. It was an echo of one of the more famous scenes of *Barsaat*, in which Nargis comes running up to Raj Kapoor and rests her head on his hand. Before it became a symbol of R. K. Studio, at Pune in 1949 it was used as the model for idols of Ganesh and Saraswati for the Ganapati *puja*: such was the impact on the public imagination of this great film team.

If Nargis could have any complaint against Raj Kapoor it could only be that he never once made a film centred around her. All their films at R. K. revolved around Raj Kapoor's bohemian roles. That Nargis the actress transcended this limitation is the greatest tribute to her talent and to her magical personality.

The spy who caught a cold

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The President's top Secret Service agent was so cool, he had finally caught a cold. And just couldn't get rid of it.

John Hunter reached for another Kleenex as he studied the blueprints of the suitcase. Could the microfilm be hidden under the steel channel? Or perhaps in the castor wheel? The elasticised strap was a good place too. He traced a finger round the sleek lines.

Having stored the plan in his photographic memory, Hunter burnt the blueprints and flushed down the remains.

He checked his Rolex. Time for Phase II.

• • •

"The birds are migrating" said the beggar as he hobbled up to him.

"Where" said Hunter, brushing aside a speck from his Gucci shoes.

"To Tangier. The birds are flamingoes" added the informer.

The contact had been made. The next stop was Tangier.

• • •

The exploding gunfire made Hunter drop down to his knees. He made a dash for the nearest car, and whipped out his custom-built automatic.

The assassin leapt into the lurking limousine which screamed into action. Slowly, the ugly snout of a machine gun emerged from the window.

Hunter fired.

• • •

It was the very same. The same slim body, the same sleek lines.

He pulled it from the wreckage of the limousine and opened it. Instinctively, he knew where the microfilm was hidden. Under the beautiful silk brocade lining. The enemy would think no one would be heartless enough to destroy that beautiful lining. Hunter felt inclined to agree.

He spoke to his belly button.

"Alpha to HQ. OK, HQ. Briggig id the VIB shuitcase. Over .... atchoo!"

Hunter sneezed so hard, the hidden microphone popped out and broke into a million pieces.

• • •

"We've been cut off!" barked Romeo at HQ. "Alpha must be in trouble, he's developed a new code. Call Section 505. I want this cracked right away."

• • •

Hunter eased his Lamborghini into the porch. A stately old dowager greeted him.

"Mr. Hunter. We were hoping you'd make it in time for dinner. This way, please."

She pressed a button and a section of the villa slid back to reveal a hubbub of computers and men.

"Good going, Alpha" beamed Romeo, walking up to him. "But what happened? Why did you change the code? And what is VIB shootcase? All of Section 505 couldn't crack it."

"I did dot" replied Hunter blowing his nose, "chage de code. I said VIB shuitcase." He held up the sleek little thing.

"I hab a gold " he added sheepishly.

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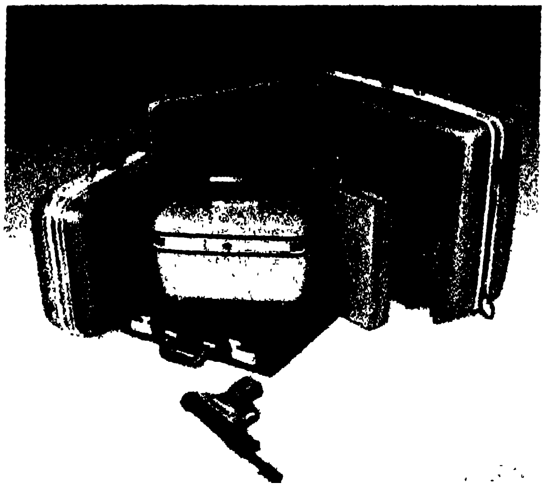
I told the President I was defecting " says a now cold-free Hunter.
He understood when I said it was to VIP."



Contour Ads-BP-38 H/81

'I am a Hindusthani first'

The following are excerpts from a speech Nargis made in 1968 at a national integration conference organised by the UP government

Brothers and sisters,

I am very happy that today I have been given the opportunity to meet my brothers and sisters in such large numbers and to meet them from such close quarters. How I wish that the topic on which I have been asked to speak was equally good.

I was born into a family where my father was a Hindu from Punjab and my mother a Musalmaan from Uttar Pradesh. And now my home is Maharashtra. I am a Hindu or a Musalmaan, Punjabi or Marathi later; (I am) first and foremost a Hindusthani.

Giving the topic of national integration so much importance, organising special meetings and giving speeches—this is not something to be happy over. These meetings, these speeches were then necessary, when 21 years before today, Hindusthan became independent. After 21 years, we should be talking about how much progress our country has made, how much foodgrain it has produced, how many industries it has been able to set up, and where. It is a matter of shame and sadness that we are (now) occupied with 'so-and-so is a Hindu, so-and-so Musalmaan, this a Kashmiri and that a Bengali.' Why don't we say that we are Hindusthani?

We are all one. Our Khuda (Allah) orBhagwan is one. Ram or Rahim are held in reverence as much by the people in Maharashtra or Gujarat or even in Punjab as the people in Bengal or Madras. If there is no difference between *puja* and *namaz* then why is there a difference among *bandon* (creation/children of God). Never has it been heard that this monkey is from Gujarat, that donkey is from Bengal, this dog is from UP, that cat is from Haryana, this donkey is a Hindu or that donkey a Musalmaan. I ask you, if there are no differences among the animals which God has created, then why among us *bandon*? Our country is a secular state where every faith, every religion, is given an equal status. And this equal status is given only in this country, Hindusthan. And we are proud of this fact.

This equal status was not given to us by anyone; we created it ourselves. We, in this republic, are ourselves kings and ourselves subjects. In the history of Hindusthan, there is one black page in which there is mention of those shameful incidents of violence and arson which took place 21 years ago before independence. Just that one page of our history forces us to hang our heads and lower our eyes in shame. If another page like that comes into our history, then what face will we show to the world?

The emotions of hate are the biggest enemy of our country today. Those who spread the poison of hate should be given that punishment which is awarded to murderers.

If we want to bring the entire country together then first and foremost we will have to put the student community in order. Those, on whose shoulders the responsibility of the country will rest tomorrow, must be brought on the right track. The responsibility of this task lies with us women. The child's first and most important university (is the home) and first teacher is its mother and it is the duty of the mother to teach this first lesson to her child: that it is first a Hindusthani and later a Gujarati or a Marathi, Hindu or Musalmaan. The lessons which are drilled into the head in childhood, always remain in the head. And this lesson is as *paak* (clean/devoid of filth and evil) as those preached by the *Gita, Bible, Guru Granth* or the *Quran Shareef.*

We are all one. Regardless of whether we do not understand each other's language, regardless of whether we are miles away from each other, regardless of whether we call Bhagwan by different names, we are all one; in one garland called Hindusthan are beaded together those roses which are individually called Hindu, Musalmaan, Sikh and Isai (Christian).

I have taken a lot of your time in bringing to my lips all that which is in my heart.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!

Her last days

PRA[illegible] B. PANCHAL

Sunjay Dutt and *Sunil Dutt carrying Nargis's body*

Ten days before her death, Nargis's condition deteriorated suddenly and she was rushed to the Breach Candy Hospital. During her last five or six days she had lost her strength completely and could not talk coherently or raise her voice above a hoarse whisper. As her condition became even more critical on 1-2 May, Sunil Dutt telephoned New York and asked her doctors at the Sloan-Kettering Hospital to fly down to Bombay. The family wanted them to operate once more on Nargis's cancer of the pancreas, one of the worst forms of cancer. An operation was planned by the two doctors, who flew in four hours before her death, for the morning of 3 May, but Nargis breathed her last at 7.35 am. Sunil Dutt was informed over the phone that she was slipping away out of doctors' control. He reached the hospital just in time to hold Nargis's hand for the last time ever.

Though Nargis's family realised three months ago that she was holding on only through will power, they did not expect the end to come for another few months, according to family friends. Her slightly improved condition in March had prompted them to allow the nurse, who had accompanied Nargis from New York, to return home on 19 March after a brief Indian holiday at Agra and Kashmir.

During her last week, cocooned in the intensive care unit of the Breach Candy Hospital where only her husband and children were permitted to be at her bedside, Nargis finally lost her strength and the fight went out of her. Her favourite niece Zaheeda (who acted in *Prem Pujari, Gambler* and *Prabhat)* met her at the hospital on 29 April. "She was sleeping when I went in," Zaheeda told SUNDAY, "and I tried to wake her up but she did not react. I was going out of the room when her nurse shook her chin, opened her eyes and woke her up. She just looked at me, that's all. I asked her whether she was in great pain. She nodded feebly. She was trying to speak to me but could not speak properly and the words sounded like a low, agonised moan. For twenty minutes she tried to speak with me. I showed her the *Quran* and told her that God would give the strength to recover. I can never forget her expression, her eyes just looked at me in a fixed way."

During her days at home, after her return from New York on the night of 5 March and before she was re-hospitalised in April at Bombay, Nargis had begun to move about a bit. She would occasionally take a stroll on the terrace outside her first-floor bedroom. Once or twice she would spend an evening with her friends in the garden.

On 11 March her children, especially the girls Namrata (called Anju in the house) and Priya, organised a very special celebration for her 23rd wedding anniversary. They took out her red wedding sari and made her wear it, and they decked her up with the same jewellery that she had worn on her wedding night. Sunil Dutt was admitted into the room only after Nargis had been done up by the girls and the first thing he did upon seeing her in her wedding dress was to ask for *sindoor* which he put on her *maang*. That morning, her son Sunjay returned from the *mahurat* of his film *Vidhaata* and placed the money he had received as the 'signing amount' at his mother's feet.

Nargis returned from New York on 5 March to see her house illuminated with *diyas*, candles and multi-coloured electric bulbs. She arrived home a little after midnight. Till ten that evening Anju, her second child, was putting up new curtains to give Nargis's bedroom a new look. Her bedroom and the bath had been totally re-decorated and a kitchenette had been added to the bedroom so that Nargis did not have to come downstairs for a cup of tea or coffee.

As the car bringing back Nargis and Sunil Dutt on 5 March reached the corner of the lane leading to the Dutt house, firecrackers burst out in the Dutt courtyard. She got down from the car and stared at her house and then she began to cry in joy—low, joyful moans of happiness. Sunil Dutt put an arm around her and held her up because she wasn't strong enough to stand on her own two feet. Family friends to whom Nargis was *didi* (elder sister) wanted to carry her upstairs to the bedroom on a chair but Nargis refused. She walked up the steps herself, supported only by Sunil Dutt, drawing upon her inner strength for each step she took.

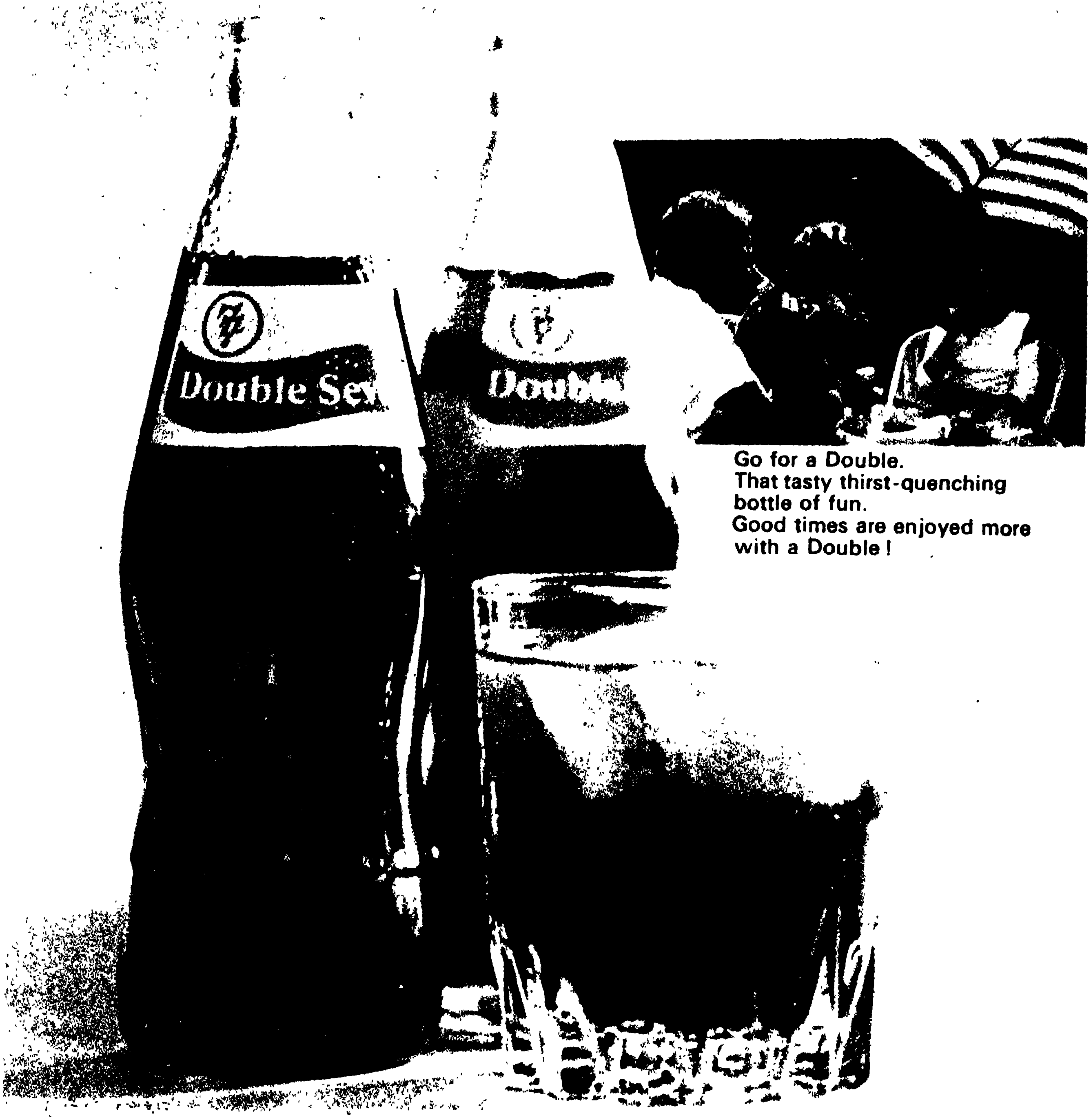
On 9 March, around six in the evening Sunil Dutt drove Nargis down to the corner of their sprawling Pali Hill bungalow where the family runs the Ajanta dubbing theatre. Mrs Dutt, as she has always been addressed after her marriage in 1958, had come to see *Rocky*, the first film starring her eldest child and her biggest weakness, 20-year-old Sunjay. She had seen 'rushes' of the film while *Rocky* was being shot, but this was the first time she was making an attempt to see the complete film. She could only see some seven reels of it before fatigue and exhaustion forced her to return to bed.

Nargis and Sunil Dutt had a light-hearted tiff over their reactions to Sunjay's performance in *Rocky*. It was over tea on the evening of 11 March. Nargis did not see any flaw in Sunjay's performance and she teased her husband, who has directed the movie and who was less satisfied with their son than her. The "tiff" ended only when Nargis and family lieutenant Raj Grover asked Sunil Dutt whether Sunjay's debut was not ten times better than Sunil's performance in *his* first movie *Railway Platform*.

Some days later, as her health improved, Rajendra Kumar arranged a private screening of his son Kumar Gaurav's first film *Love Story*. Though the film magazines have made contemporaries Sunjay and Gaurav rivals, Nargis liked the film so much that she saw it once again. A gesture that was typical of her generous nature.

Nargis would have been 52 years old this year. It was at the age of 52 that her mother, the illustrious Jaddanbai, had died too.

Ask for a Double



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OBM/6589

The reporter who bought a 'wife'

By Anil Saari

On 26 April 1981, Mr Ashwini Sarin, a 29-year-old Delhi-based reporter of the *Indian Express* received a middle-aged woman by the name of Kamla. The delivery took place at the Nizamuddin railway station in south Delhi in exchange for Rs 2,300. Kamla was subsequently taken to the Arya Orphanage and Women's Home, where she is at the time of writing. By virtue of the transaction, Mr Sarin, probably Kamla's third buyer, became a participant in the notorious flesh trade of the country.

What was the motive behind Mr Sarin's purchase? The risky venture was undertaken by the *Indian Express* in order to make a stunning news report on the flesh trade in the country. Women kidnapped from all over the country, especially from Andhra Pradesh, Nepal and Bangladesh refugees as well as from poverty-stricken areas along Chambal's dacoit-infested ravines find their way to Dholpur in Madhya Pradesh. They are also found in the neighbouring areas of Morena and Agra, the main centres for flesh trade in the country.

It began a year ago, in May 1980. Mr Sarin had gone to Madhya Pradesh to report on the Assembly elections, when he came to know that Panchgaon and a few adjoining villages were the main markets for trafficking in slave women. After discussions with the executive editor of the *Indian Express*, Mr Arun Shourie, it was decided that the only way to do the story was to actually buy a woman and produce her before the Supreme Court at Dehi. The project was kept a secret, and no one, not even the proprietor of the newspaper, Mr R N. Goenka, was informed.

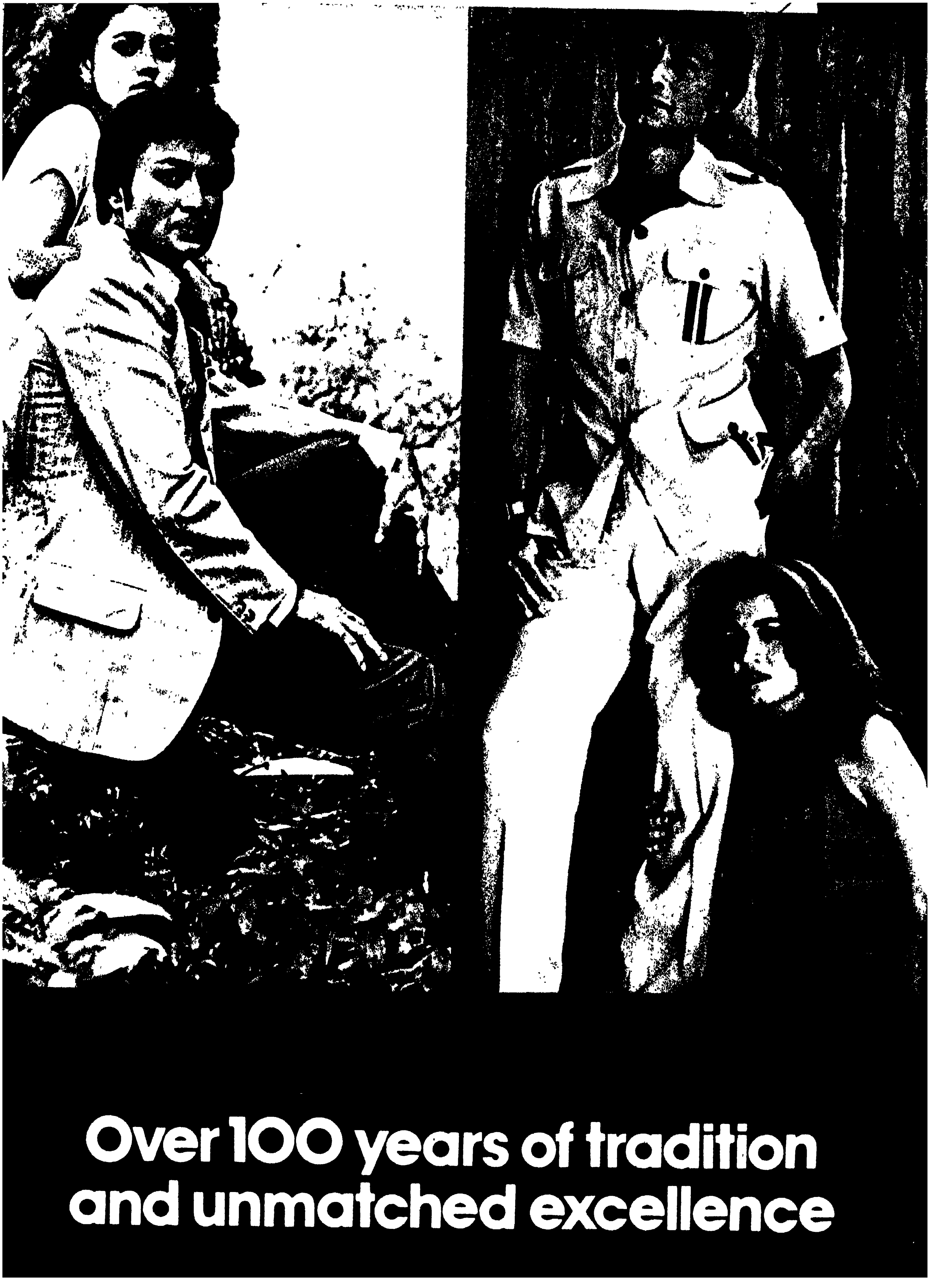
In January 1981, Mr Sarin undertook a series of ten trips to Dholpur, Panchgaon, Morena, Agra and Etawah to establish his credentials as a prospective buyer. He posed as a doctor with a large farm in Punjab, who was looking for a wife for his compounder Meanwhile, in Delhi, Mr Shourie, the executive director, began studying the legal aspects of the case. What was necessary was the establishment of a motive. This was needed because in the past, social workers who had tried to protest against such illegal trafficking were themselves implicated In a letter dated 4 April 1981, Mr Shourie explained the nature and motive of the venture to five eminent citizens: "For the past few months we have been investigating a major and inhuman racket. This investigation is reaching a stage where it is necessary for us to take a few friends into confidence for a purpose that will become clear during the course of this. A colleague of mine learnt some months ago that every year after Holi a regular auction is held of girls and women from all parts of India. This auction is held in several villages in western UP and Rajasthan and goes on for several weeks. After examining the matter, I felt that if we merely publish a general account of the racket, it would go the way of all other general accounts. I, therefore, decided that the only way to bring home the enormity of the crime to citizens and authorities was to actually purchase a girl, bring her to the office of the *Indian Express* in Delhi and then publish a detailed account of the racket." He further wrote: "Once the details are published it is entirely likely that to shield themselves, particularly the persons in the racket, in particular the police, will turn around and say that, in fact, we are the ones who have been trafficking in women and girls and that now, to escape being caught, we have fabricated the story that we were engaged in an investigation."

Kamla

Ashwini Sarin

On 29 April, a day after the news appeared in the *Indian Express*, the Madhya Pradesh government ordered an inquiry into the trafficking of women and *ordered the police to register an offence for the purchase of a woman by Sarin.* The very same day, a party of Delhi police arrived at the Arya Orphanage and Women's Home, to take Kamla to the Nari Niketan, where she would be in some kind of police custody. It was only after an interim stay order was shown that the Delhi police brought Kamla back to the Arya Orphanage and Women's Home. But matters did not end there. On 1 May the sub-divisional magistrate, Morena, issued a warrant to the police for the recovery of Kamla The warrant was applied on the very day the Supreme Court admitted the writ petition filed by three staff members of the *Indian Express.*

Mr Arun Shourie's belief "...So many things are rotten in our society that nobody pays any attention to it...Now, to even catch the attention of the reader you have to do the same thing in a new way," has paid off dividends. Meanwhile, the Rajasthan Yuva Patrakar Sangh has decided to award the best story award to Mr Ashwini Sarin. And what of Kamla? Effects of her traumatic experience seem to be wearing off. She is cheerful and happy with the congenial surroundings of the Arya Orphanage and Women's Home. What the Supreme Court decides is yet to be seen. ■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Srinagar's income tax raids: High and low drama

SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA
pieced together the story

Tuesday, 21 April 1981 was an unusual day in the history of the income tax department. Some 270 officers, clerks and junior staff drawn from various establishments in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta had been asked to report for outstation duty at 7.30 am on that day The rendezvous point was the basement of Mayur Bhavan, behind the Super Bazaar building near Connaught Place in the heart of New Delhi. Mayur Bhavan houses the top-secret directorate of intelligence (investigations) of the IT department. The choice of its spacious basement (which is used as a municipal car park) the rendezvous was therefore natural A day earlier, the taxmen had been told to prepare themselves to go out of Delhi for three days. Specific. instructions had been issued to the men not to bring beddings. The taxmen felt that the searches were to be carried out somewhere within Delhi and they had been asked to bring clothing only as a camouflage for keeping the raids secret till the last moment. A few felt that the destination was either Calcutta or Bombay because the two cities together account for nearly 80% of the income tax recovery in the country, since most of the corporate headquarters of companies are located there. The large size of the contingent seemed to justify this belief. Little did the taxmen know that they had reported for an unusual mission to Srinagar, a city where the income tax generation is so negligible that it is under the jurisdiction of an income tax commissioner based in Amritsar. The taxmen certainly did not know that they were to be the first-ever raiding party which was to be airlifted for the operations. Little did they also know that theirs would be the first raiding party to be attacked by mobs sponsored by the ruling political party of a state.

Sheikh Abdullah

Mealpacks, comprising *kachauris, puris, alu sabzi* and a *barfi* each were distributed. The taxmen were asked to proceed to the six private deluxe buses which were parked outside Mayur Bhavan. They had been given specific instructions a day earlier stressing that no luggage was to bear the name of owners. Accordingly, numbers were given to each member of the contingent. These were to be prominently displayed on the luggages. The taxmen took their places in the buses according to the numbers given to them. At 8.30 am the six buses took off in six different directions and reached Delhi airport almost simultaneously at 10 am. It was then that the taxmen realised that they were going to be airlifted somewhere. Speculation started. Someone said it was to be Calcutta. Others thought it would be Bombay. A few felt it was going to be Bangalore.

The domestic departure lounge of Delhi airport had been cordoned off. The taxmen were taken to the lounge and given boarding passes for flight IC 426A, an additional Airbus flight. No one knew where the flight was going. An officially-sponsored rumour was spread that the destination was Bombay. For the clerks and the lower staff, it was going to be a novel experience. None of them had been in an aircraft before. And many had never seen Bombay. Despite strict instructions, many junior staffers made a beeline for the public telephones to inform their friends and families that they were "flying to Bombay." A show of disapproval was made but the top officials did not make any efforts to stop the phone-calls.

A few minutes before noon, an announcement was made asking the passengers of flight IC 426A to proceed to the aircraft. There was a scramble among the junior staffers and clerical staff to get into the airport bus. The flight took off at noon. In an announcement the airhostess on the flight said that the plane was going to land at Srinagar, in an hour and 15 minutes. It was then that the destination came to be known to most of the passengers on board the flight.

There were about 20 senior officers of the rank of assistant commissioner on board, besides the director of intelligence (investigations), Mr K. V. Raghavan. A commissioner from Delhi, in charge of appeals, Mr T. P. Jhunjhunwala, too was on board.

The Airbus had flown in from Calcutta, as the newspapers on board indicated. There was a comic interlude during the flight. When the scenic beauty of the Himalayas began to unfold, the right side of the aircraft had clouds and on the left mountains could be seen. The passengers on the right, rushed to the left of the aircraft to peep out of the windows. Suddenly the aircraft banked to the left. Someone shouted,"*Aare, kya karte ho? Balance kharab ho raha hai* (What are you doing? The balance of the plane is being affected)," and everyone jumped back to their seats.

On the flight, the leaders of the 40 search parties met the members of their teams individually. They were told to assemble under their leader after landing at Srinagar. During the flight the leaders of the search teams were given warrants of authorisation (under section 132(1) of the Income Tax Act) by the director of intelligence (investigations). They were also given a cyclostyled brief which described what they should look for, where they should look for and how they could apprach their target premises. The leaders were supplied with search-kit packets comprising a brass seal, a rubber stamp, a piece of sealing wax, a candle, some cloth (for sealing locks), blank *punchnama* forms, blank witness forms, blank forms of declaration under section 132(3) of the IT Act, carbon papers, blank white paper sheets and needle and thread (for sewing the cloth around locks before sealing).

The plane touched down at Srinagar at 1.15 pm. The landing was bumpy and it was raining. Ten buses were waiting. Under their respective leaders, the taxmen filed into the buses. By now, they knew that they were going to be a part of a massive search operation. Inside the buses they saw that half the seats had been occupied by CRPF personnel, who were to provide them protection. (Although 200 CRP men were deputed their presence was not effective.)

The "striking time" of the operations was originally scheduled at 1.00 pm. The simultaneous raids on the premises of the Srinagar businessmen (mostly dealing in carpets) were to begin at Srinagar, Delhi and Bombay at the same time.The search parties in the other three cities struck on time. But the inefficiency of the Posts and Telegraphs department was a boon to the IT department—no message could be conveyed to Srinagar from the other places because of the faulty trunk telephone system. The simultaneous striking time is kept so as to make it impossible for the raided person to warn his other establishments and business associates about a pending raid. The striking time at Srinagar was then put to two pm and the ten buses left for their respective destinations.

Farooq Abdullah

Srinagar has a very small income tax establishment and all the income tax men go home for lunch. Mr Prem Singh, the local ITO, returned from lunch around two pm on 21 April and found some strangers in his room. One of them was occupying his chair. Infuriated,Mr Singh enquired of the strangers what they wanted. The man sitting on his chair told Mr Singh that he was Mr Raghavan, the director of intelligence (investigations) and introduced the other senior IT officers from Delhi to the bewildered ITO. The operation had been kept a top secret. Even Mr L. R. Jain, the IT commissioner based at Amritsar, who is in charge of Jammu and Kashmir, was kept in the dark. Mr Jain was at that time attending a conference in New Delhi. The local income tax office was converted into the control room and the biggest-ever search operation in the history of the IT department began.

Srinagar has no municipal house numbers. The description of the premises to be searched, therefore, contained only the name of the road or the locality and a vague description of the house. When the search teams reached their respective destinations at five minutes before two, they were in many cases unable to locate the premises. In Nawan Bazaar, for instance, they were supposed to raid a shop named Mattoo and Sons (a shop belonging to the brother of the son-in-law of the chief minister, Sheikh Abdullah). There were six shops by the same name and each of these dealt in carpets. It took the search teams some time to locate the right premises. In another place, the team was told that there were 250 Mattoos around. Which one did they want? In another instance, a particular house having blue walls and blue windows was described. Ultimately when the right house was located, it was found to be having white walls and blue windows.

There was a total bar on the involvement of the local staff and this was reflected in the shoddy planning.

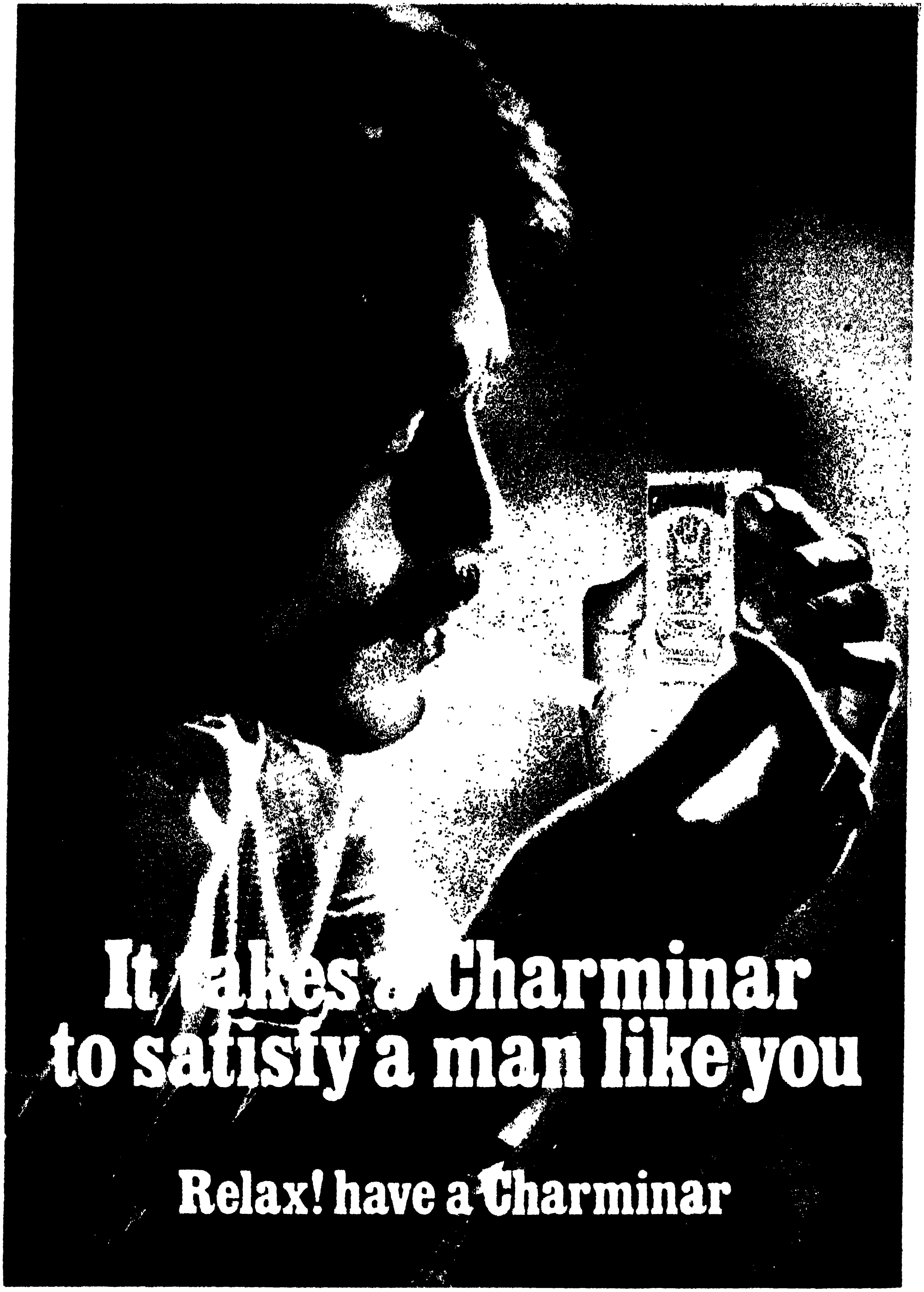
The brief to the leaders of the search teams was incorrect. The telephone number in one instance, turned out to be that of a tailoring shop which was wrong. When the search teams faced difficulties in locating the premises they tried to contact the control room over telephone. But all they got were angry rebuffs from the person at

Why was Mr Jhunjhunwala at Srinagar?

Mr T. P. Jhunjhunwala is an important name in the income tax department these days. No, he is not the top man in the organisation, but by virtue of his "connections" he has emerged as the kingpin in the department. Mr Jhunjhunwala is one of the income tax commissioners posted in Delhi and is designated commissioner (appeals). The income tax department has its own system of appeals by the assessees against its decisions and the commissioner (appeals), therefore, is expected to be as impartial as a judge.

Mr Jhunjhunwala was present in Srinagar during the days when the raids were carried out. He was accompanied by three of his favourite assistant commissioners from the appeals section—Mr Sikander Talwar, Mr K. K. Kapila and Mr S. K. Sharma. The presence of these four officers in the raiding team which went to Srinagar raised many eyebrows among the income tax officers, because it was considered highly improper for personnel from the appeals section to be present on such occasions.

Though the officers could not protest against Mr Jhunjhunwala's presence, the resentment against him came to the surface on the night of 23 April, when a combined delegation of officers, clerks and junior staff called on the chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Mr O. V. Kuruvilla. Mr Kuruvilla was sitting with Mr Jhunjhunwala and the director of intelligence (investigations) of the income tax department, Mr K. V. Raghavan, in a room in Broadway hotel when the combined delegation called on him to express their inability to carry out the raids. The first condition put forward by the delegation was that only Mr Kuruvilla and Mr Raghavan be present at the meeting. Mr Jhunjhunwala then quietly walked out.



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the other end. After sometime the angry tailor said *"Kya control room laga rakkha hai? Yeh darzee ka dukan hai.* (What is this control room you are talking about? This is a tailor's shop)." After that the officer in charge of the search team sent his men in taxis to the control room to get correct information.

When after initial difficulties the search party reached Mattoo and Sons in Nawan Bazaar, they found that their troubles had only begun. The owner of the shop, a relative of the chief minister, whipped out a pistol and told the taxmen they were trespassers. He locked them up in a room. Then he burnt his account books and documents and called in the police. Towards the evening two DSPs from the local police station came to tell the taxmen that as trespassers, they would be arrested. The drama went on till the early hours of the next day, when the taxmen were rescued.

Apart from this incident, the raids went off peacefully on the first day. At night the search teams were lodged at the prestigious Broadway Hotel and at the New Park Hotel. This was for the first time that search teams were told not to bring beddings. The normal daily allowance of the income tax officers on outstation duty is Rs 30 per day The allowance of the clerks and the junior staff is even lower. Special funds had been sanctioned by the union finance ministry so that the team to Srinagar could be airlifted and lodged in luxury hotels.

Since work had started late in the afternoon on the first day, most of the searches could not be completed. More, the bushshirt and sandal-clad taxmen could not be left in the cold as the sun went down (pullovers were provided later) So, the premises were sealed for continuing the searches on the next day But there was some confusion on Wednesday. As the news of the search teams staying on Boulevard Road spread, there were agitations and demands for additional security.

The businessmen meanwhile began to organise themselves. They contacted the president of the ruling Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Mr Farooq Abdullah, MP and asked for his help. Mr Abdullah is the chief minister's son, who has been nominated by the Sheikh as his successor in state politics. After the afternoon *namaz*, Mr Farooq Abdullah visited the premises which were being searched. He met the taxmen and reassuringly told them, "We all belong to this great nation. Kashmir is your home, we are here to look after you." The taxmen were pleased. Mr Abdullah remained patient throughout his rounds and repeated the same "reassuring" words to all the search teams he met. Only in a shop on Boulevard Road he was annoyed by an ITO who spoke to him roughly.

Mr Farooq Abdullah finished his rounds around 2.30 pm. Soon after the search parties were attacked by mobs and mercilessly beaten up. For most of the taxmen, this was the first trip to Srinagar. They did not know the way back to their hotels and to make matters worse the roads had been barricaded by mobs while the vehicles of the taxmen had been damaged. They had no option but to flee for their lives. Many hid in houses of sympathetic people who took pity on them. Some ladies in the search teams were also badly treated. One of the women injured, a probationary ITO was Miss L. Sailo, daughter of Mizoram's former CM, Brigadier Sailo.

The plight of the taxmen lodged in the New Park Hotel was the worst. Boulevard Road, where the hotel is located, was one of the worst theaters of mob violence. So, the taxmen could not even retreat into the hotel unlike the people put up at the Broadway. Till the midnight of 22 April the IT officers did not know the fate of many of their colleagues. Many had been hiding in various parts of Srinagar and only after nightfall did they summon enough courage to go back to the hotel. The exact number of injured was not known till after midnight. The local doctors refused to treat the injured for fear of retaliation by the mobs. Finally Border Security Force doctors were called in. They provided first-aid and treatment to the injured. The BSF flashed a message to Delhi about the day's happenings around midnight over its own intelligence network and the reports were placed before the home minister. A decision was taken to evacuate the New Park Hotel and all the taxmen were thereafter lodged at the Broadway—some rooms even accommodating upto six persons. A contingent of BSF guards was put to guard the hotel.

The guilty pullovers

If you are planning a holiday in Kashmir this summer, make sure you do not wear dark steel-grey or sky-blue woolen pullovers. The income tax men were not prepared to face the cold weather of Srinagar as they were not told about their destination before leaving Delhi. When the planeload of taxmen reached the Kashmir valley, they found their half-sleeve shirts inadequate. The income tax department, therefore, made bulk purchases of pullovers and distributed them among the taxmen.

The pullovers were of a cheap variety. Priced at Rs 35 a piece, they were manufactured by the Lal Imli mills of Kanpur. Normally such pullovers are not worn by tourists at Srinagar, so the cheap pullovers made the taxmen stand out in the city. The violent mobs which attacked the taxmen after the raids, therefore, found it easy to identify them. According to some of the taxmen who participated in the Srinagar raids, some non-taxmen wearing similar pullovers were also roughed-up by the violent mob.

On Thursday the chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Mr O. V. Kuruvilla, flew to Srinagar to boost the sagging morale of the taxmen. No raids were undertaken on that day. At one stage a decision was taken in New Delhi to evacuate the entire team from Srinagar. Later it was decided that such an action would only show that the central government had cowed down in face of mob violence. It was decided then that the taxmen would stay at Srinagar and continue the raids.

Hindi filmstars Poonam Dhillon and Raj Babbar were shooting at Srinagar and the day was spent by some taxmen watching the two. In the evening a combined delegation of officers, clerks and junior staff met the CBDT chairman. The delegation told Mr Kuruvilla that it was not possible for them to carry on the searches. The taxmen were highly critical of the way in which the raids had been ordered and planned. They wanted to know from the CBDT chairman why seven probationary officers, including five women, had been brought on this mission. Mr Kuruvilla listened to the delegation's views and said, "Do I take it that you gentlemen will not carry out these searches?" The taxmen said they would not and the meeting ended.

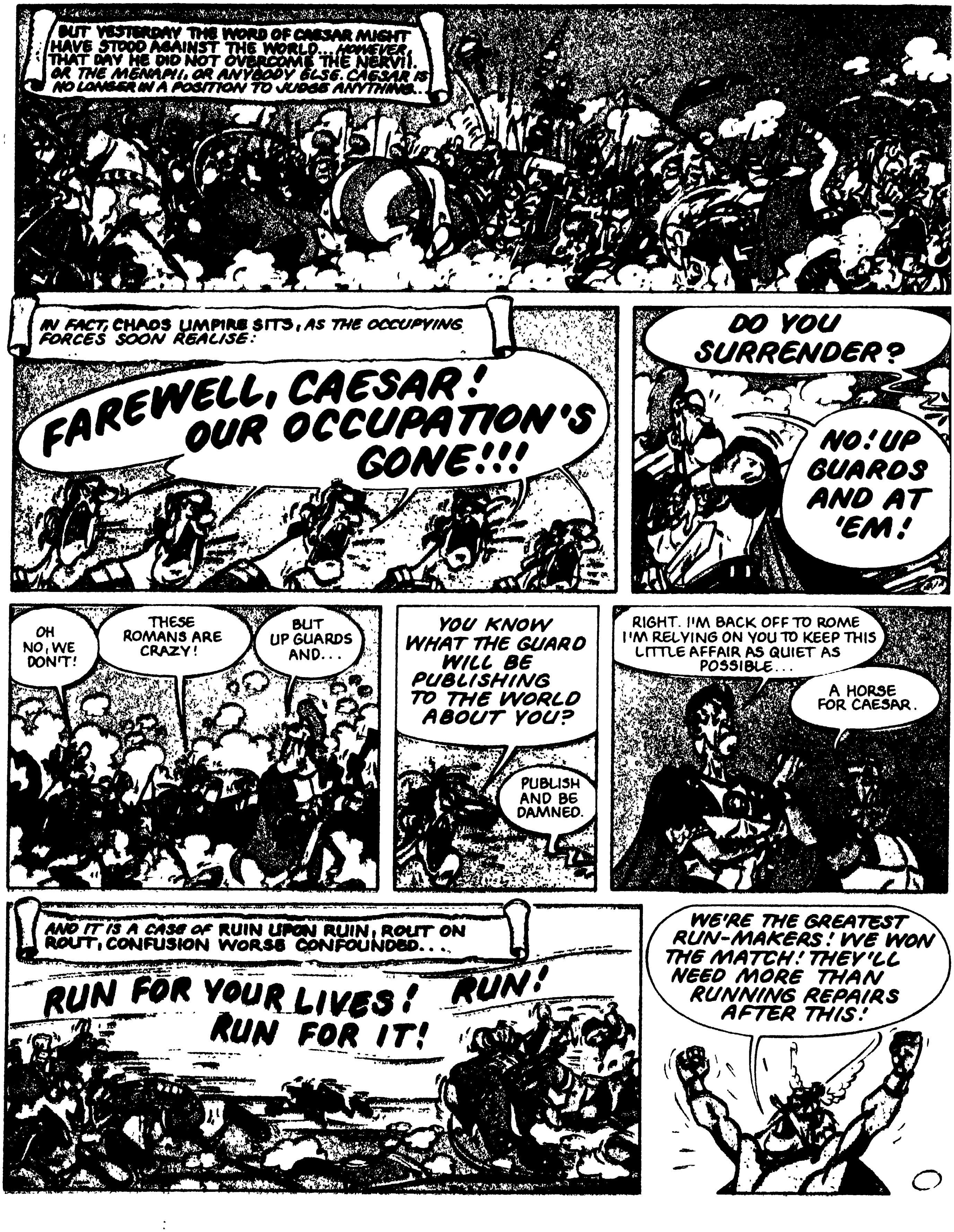
It was decided by the high authorities that the injured personnel and those unwilling to take part in the searches should be sent back.

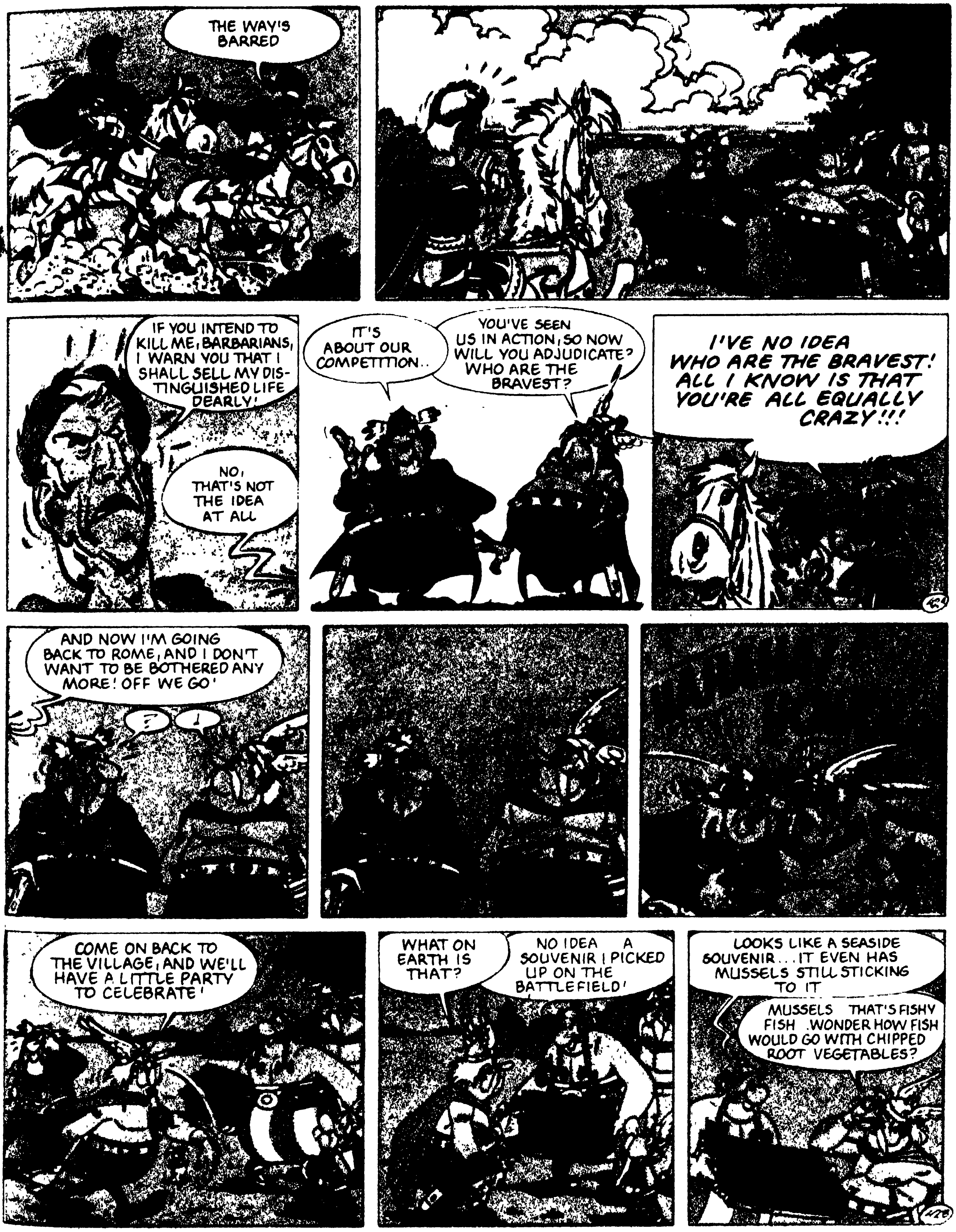
The next day was Friday, the day of prayers at the mosques in the afternoon. So it was decided that the risk of the raiding parties being attacked by mobs returning from the prayers was high. No raids were, therefore, held on that Friday, 24 April. On the morning of the 25th a large part of the team was airlifted back to Delhi. The raids were resumed with the help of those officers and staff who were willing to stay back. The families of the Sahnis and the Shaws whose business premises were being searched cooperated in the raids. The BSF provided security for the searchers.

On Sunday 26 April, some more taxmen were asked to return to Delhi. Those who remained in Srinagar were given money for expenses. Mr Kuruvilla and Mr Raghavan accompanied by some senior officers identified new targets for subsequent raids. On Monday some more taxmen were sent back. Raids were conducted with the help of a few. Nothing much was found during the raids on Monday. On 28th April morning the remaining taxmen prepared to leave for the airport. A small team went to investigate some bank lockers. They found 10 kgs of gold biscuits in a toffee box in a locker. The entire team flew back to Delhi on Tuesday afternoon, a week after they had left. ■

BELGIUM

by GOSCINNY
and UDERZO


BUT YESTERDAY THE WORD OF CAESAR MIGHT HAVE STOOD AGAINST THE WORLD... HOWEVER, THAT DAY HE DID NOT OVERCOME THE NERVII, OR THE MENAPII, OR ANYBODY ELSE. CAESAR IS NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO JUDGE ANYTHING...
IN FACT, CHAOS UMPIRE SITS, AS THE OCCUPYING FORCES SOON REALISE:
FAREWELL, CAESAR! OUR OCCUPATION'S GONE!!!
DO YOU SURRENDER?
NO! UP GUARDS AND AT 'EM!
OH NO, WE DON'T!
THESE ROMANS ARE CRAZY!
BUT UP GUARDS AND...
YOU KNOW WHAT THE GUARD WILL BE PUBLISHING TO THE WORLD ABOUT YOU?
PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED.
RIGHT. I'M BACK OFF TO ROME I'M RELYING ON YOU TO KEEP THIS LITTLE AFFAIR AS QUIET AS POSSIBLE...
A HORSE FOR CAESAR.
AND IT IS A CASE OF RUIN UPON RUIN, ROUT ON ROUT, CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED...
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
RUN!
RUN FOR IT!
WE'RE THE GREATEST RUN-MAKERS! WE WON THE MATCH! THEY'LL NEED MORE THAN RUNNING REPAIRS AFTER THIS!


THE WAY'S BARRED
IF YOU INTEND TO KILL ME, BARBARIANS, I WARN YOU THAT I SHALL SELL MY DISTINGUISHED LIFE DEARLY!
NO, THAT'S NOT THE IDEA AT ALL
IT'S ABOUT OUR COMPETITION..
YOU'VE SEEN US IN ACTION, SO NOW WILL YOU ADJUDICATE? WHO ARE THE BRAVEST?
I'VE NO IDEA WHO ARE THE BRAVEST! ALL I KNOW IS THAT YOU'RE ALL EQUALLY CRAZY!!!
AND NOW I'M GOING BACK TO ROME, AND I DON'T WANT TO BE BOTHERED ANY MORE! OFF WE GO!
?
!
COME ON BACK TO THE VILLAGE, AND WE'LL HAVE A LITTLE PARTY TO CELEBRATE!
WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT?
NO IDEA. A SOUVENIR I PICKED UP ON THE BATTLEFIELD!
LOOKS LIKE A SEASIDE SOUVENIR... IT EVEN HAS MUSSELS STILL STICKING TO IT
MUSSELS. THAT'S FISHY FISH. WONDER HOW FISH WOULD GO WITH CHIPPED ROOT VEGETABLES?
42B

SPECIAL REPORT

A country in exile

When, in 1975, the Spaniards left Western Sahara (then Spanish Sahara) in the extreme west of the Sahara desert, they took a very unusual decision: they handed over half the country to Morocco and the remaining half to Mauritania. The angry Saharawis retaliated by immediately announcing the formation of the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic. While women and children huddled into refugee camps in southern Algeria (which gave the Saharawis shelter and recognised theirs as an independent country), the men joined the militant Polisario Front which was formerly fighting the Spanish colonialists. After a coup in Mauritania, the new regime signed a peace pact with the Saharawis and returned that portion of the territory which had been in their hands. But Morocco did not. The Polisario Front is now fighting a war against Morocco for the rest of their country, an area close to Europe and rich with marine wealth along the Saharan coast. SHEKHAR BHATIA travelled to the refugee camps in southern Algeria and the towns captured by the Polisario Front in Western Sahara to report.

In the middle of a desert stand a hundred-odd canvas tents. It is a bitterly cold winter evening, and all the tents look alike from the outside. Inside one of these, over the sandy floor lie warm rugs. Along three sides lie comfortable matresses, covered with colourful blankets In the centre stands a gas lamp. As you enter from the cold, you feel a cozy warmth though there is no fire. On one side sits a distinguished looking, bearded young man. He speaks in Arabic: "We do not believe in an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Our policy is two eyes for one, two teeth for one tooth." His name is Mahmud Larosi—a member of the "Revolutionary Command Council" of Western Sahara (formerly Spanish Sahara), a country located on the extreme west of the great Sahara desert.

For long decades this sparsely populated desert country on the Atlantic coast was a Spanish colony. When the Spaniards finally left in 1975, they took an unusual decision: they handed over half this country to Morocco in the north and the remaining to Mauritania in the south. Immediately after the Spaniards left, the angry Saharawis, as the local people are called, announced the creation of the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic and launched a guerilla war against the two countries. Accordingly, refugee camps were set up in southern Algeria which gave them shelter. Hundreds of tents were pitched and their women, children and old people were moved into them. The men joined the militant

A Polisario soldier

Polisario Front (acronym for Front Populaire Pour La Liberation de Saguia El Hamra et Rio de Oro) which had been fighting a guerilla war against the Spaniards. But then came a bloodless coup in Mauritania and the new regime signed a peace pact with the Saharawis, giving up all control over the territory. It was then that the Polisario attacks were turned solely against the Moroccans who occupy towns in Western Sahara. And they are resolved to win back their land. As Mohamed Adbelkader, an old man in the refugee camp said, "We return good with more good; and we fight evil with more evil. As long as a single child is alive, nobody can capture our land."

This refugee camp in south Algeria is in a desolate place, miles away from civilisation. To reach the place you have to take a three-hour flight from Algiers to a town called Tindouf, and then another three-hour Land Rover ride deep into the desert. There are few signs of vegetation. The land is either flat, or full of craters. People there call it "the land of the moon." There are no roads either. Only some well-treaded tyre tracks. To protect your face from the cold wind and the sand you use an *el-tham,* a six-feet-long piece of cloth which you wrap around your head, face and neck and look like a Bedouin. For as long as you stay in the desert you may forget your toilet paper but never the *el-tham.* But why are the refugee camps in such way out places? "In 1975 the conditions were such that this place offered the only possibility," replies Ahmed Nourdin, who speaks Arabic, English, Spanish and a bit of French and is incharge of Western Sahara's relations with Asia. "We accepted whatever assistance was given by Algeria."

All essential facilities are provided for in these camps—it is like a country in exile, though there is no currency. There are schools and hospitals and every family gets its ration of flour to make bread, cheese, sugar, tea, gas cylinders for cooking, and even matchboxes and cigarettes for men. Some of it comes from relief organisations and some from "sympathetic countries."

Khadijitu, a young woman whose father died in the war, used to live in a comfortable house in the Dakhla town in Western Sahara. Today she is reduced to living on charity in a tent. Her case is not unique. All those living in the refugee camps are equal: eating the same food, sending their children to the same school. Even marriages take place in these camps. If a child falls sick and is admitted to the hospital, the mother can stay with the baby and look after it. But even if you have money, there is nothing you can buy—the nearest shop is in Tindouf, 200 km from the camp.

To keep themselves warm in winter the Saharawis have sufficient blankets, but no firewood. For water they rely on a well nearby. They tell you not to be scared by the sandy colour of the water. "It's absolutely fit for drinking." But not so in some areas in Western Sahara where the fighting is on. "The well provides water for friend and foe. When Bedouins fought their bitter feuds, they never poisoned the wells. Islam forbids it. But the Moroccans have even gone to the extent of poisoning some wells," they allege.

Sitting in the tent young Khandoud, who was an active fighter till a couple of years ago and is now an advisor to his government, tells you that life in these tents is more comfortable than in the desert in Western Sahara where fighting is on. In the refugee camps there are no signs of war. Just a few rifle-carrying Polisario men who are waiting to accompany you to areas which have seen action.

You ask them where they got hold of the Russian automatic rifles. "We captured them from the Moroccans who had got them from Egypt." They tell you that Egypt had received a lot of arms from Russia. When Sadat broke off with the Russians, he sold these arms to King Hasan of Morocco. But where did they get their initial supply of arms from? The reply is the

Moroccan soldiers captured by the Polisario Front

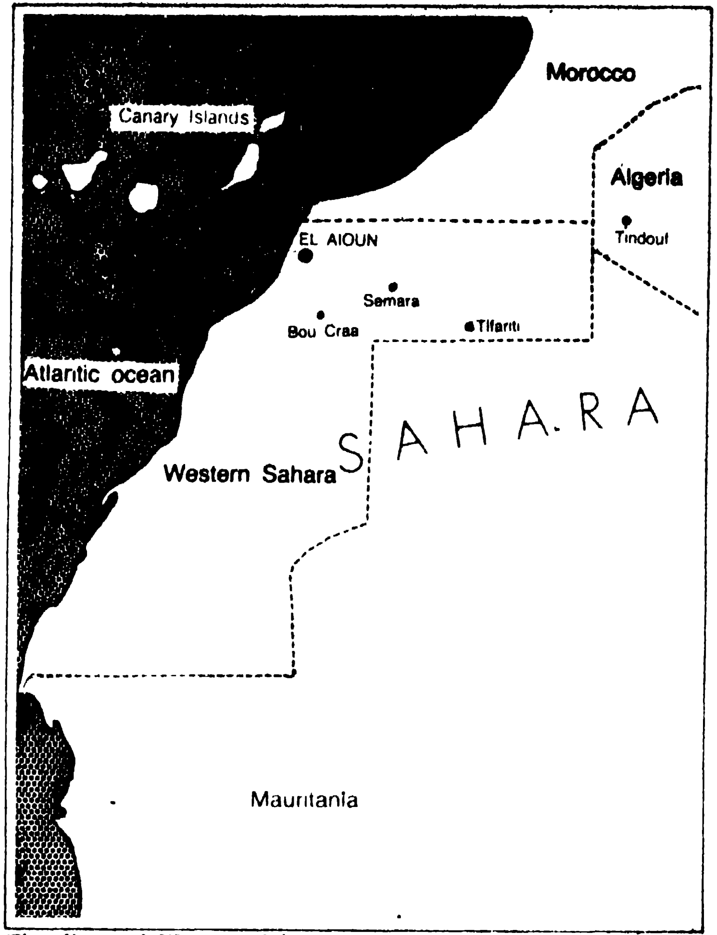
same: "We captured them from the Moroccans." After repeated questions, the only additional information you get is, "We pooled in our family arms, including the knives." They clearly refuse to tell the source of their weapons. But they add that the war they are fighting now is no longer on guerilla lines. "We're now fighting a classical war."

They say that their struggle against the Spanish began in 1965. The "first real guerilla attack" they launched was on 20 May 1973. "At that time we had only one camel." Just a few days before that attack the people of Western Sahara had their first "clandestine congress" and the Polisario Front was born. Today, even the United Nations has admitted that "the only dominant force in all Western Sahara is Polisario Front. The International Court of Justice at the Hague, too, has said that "there is no link, no relationship between the people of Western Sahara and the king of Morocco."

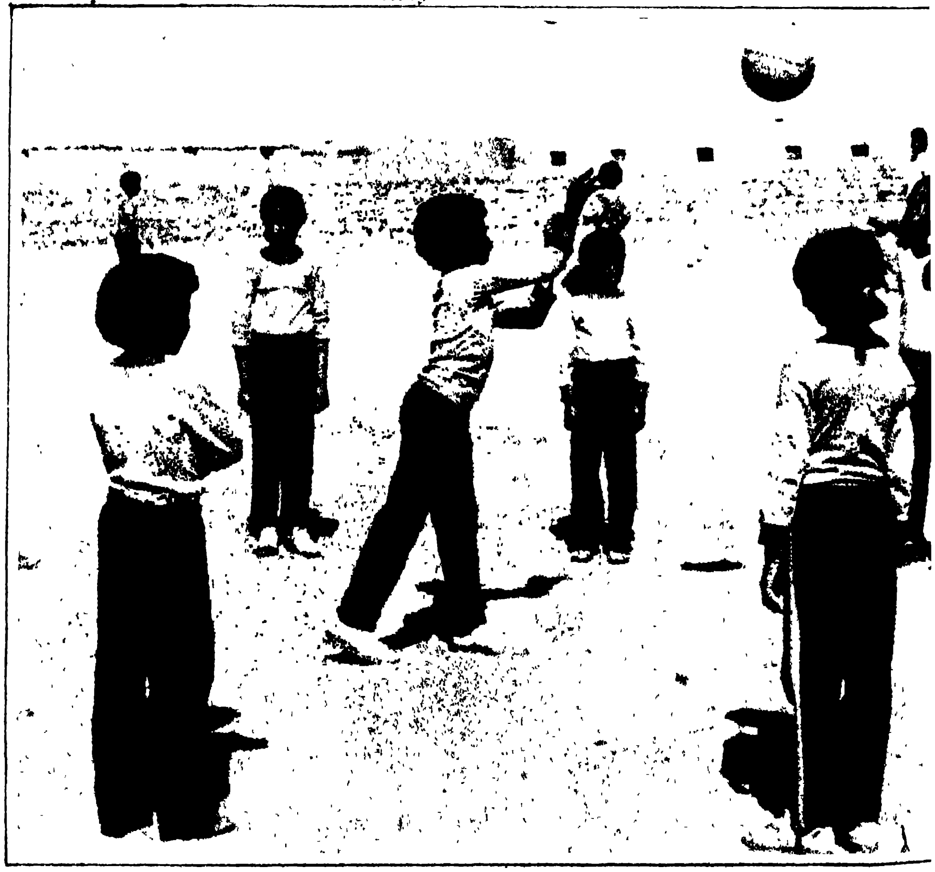
After the declaration of the ICJ King Hasan of Morocco started his famous "Green March." Half-a-million Moroccan civilians started a long march into Western Sahara on the orders of the King. They were told to settle down in Western Sahara so that King Hasan could claim the disputed territory. The Polisario calls it "Morocco's quiet invasion" because they allege that while all attention was diverted to the marching civilians, the Moroccan forces quietly captured some strategic towns in the Western Sahara.

By restructuring their forces "to launch a classical war" the Polisario has recaptured some of these occupied towns from the Moroccans. Some of these towns are smaller than villages. To reach one such town called Tifariti (occupied by the Moroccans in 1977), about 500 km from the refugee camp, takes nearly 24 hours in a Land Rover. In March 1979 the Polisario attacked this town and liberated it. The place even has a dilapitated airstrip. Says Khandoud: "We shot down a Moroccan F-5 plane here. We attacked it and liberated 5,000 Saharawi people." These people were living in this small town—which doesn't seem big enough for even 1,000 people—under Moroccan occupation They could not get away from here because the Moroccans would not let them. Now they are living in the refugee camps in Algeria. Near the main building in Tifariti, which looks like a single-storeyed army officers' mess, lies a burnt tank. How many Polisario soldiers fought for liberating this town? The reply is evasive. What were the casualties on each side? Khandoud hedges the question. "What is important is that we have liberated the town," he says. But he is positive about one thing: "The arms we captured here were used by us for liberating other towns in our country."

By now it is evident that if you ask them any sensitive question you won't get a straightforward reply. How many people are living in refugee camps?



The disputed Western Sahara territory



Saharawi children in a school in the refugee camp

Arms captured from the Moroccans by the Polisario Front

The secretary-general of the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic

What is the strength of your army? Who is financing you? How do you train your soldiers in the use of sophiscated weapons? The answer to the last question is: "We learn from the catalogues which we try and capture along with the tanks." But they all repeat: "We have liberated 85 per cent of our country." However, some of the most important towns like the capital city of El Aioun (pronounced Elayuun), the phosphate-rich Bou Craa, the coastal towns of Villa Cisnero and Cabo Bojador and the holy city of Semara are still under Moroccan occupation. The Moroccans have garrisoned these towns. The result is that their mobility is limited to the walls of these fortress-like towns. Khandoud says very proudly that "they are static and we (the Polisario) are mobile."

But to liberate a town is no easy task. For instance, to liberate Hause in the north, 200 km from Tifariti, the Polisario fought for a month. When the Moroccans fled, they followed a scorched-earth retreat and destroyed everything. They dynamited all the buildings, leaving the place uninhabitable. The Saharawis living in the occupied towns, too, have a very difficult time. It is said that initially some were given the choice either of joining the Moroccan forces or starving. The Moroccans, according to the Polisario, needed the help of the Saharawis because they knew the local terrain. Some joined the Moroccan army and passed on secret information to the Polisario. The Polisario say that now as a rule the Moroccans recruit only one Saharawi per army unit so that they can use him as well as keep an eye on him.

When King Hasan started his Green March he quietly brought in 4,000 soldiers into a town called Echdirya on the border of Morocco. They built a supply base there. The Polisario attacked it in 1979. They blocked the Moroccan supply line and forced them to flee after a ten-day battle. Countless empty gunshells are scattered all over the place. The few buildings that were there are all neatly dynamited. You can see the branches and the barbed-wire fence encircling the tiny town. You wonder who could be living in these desolate places. Today, a few Polisario soldiers are based in each of the liberated towns. There may be more but only a few are visible. The distance between one liberated town and another is around 200 km or more. Some are just like forts. Only instead of the moat there are minefields, sand obstacles and trenches. These towns were built by the Spanish colonialists because of their geographical locations—easy availability of water and manpower.

Encouraged by their success, in August 1979 the Polisario struck into Moroccan territory. They attacked Leboirat, a town in South Morocco, and liberated it. A very difficult task considering the fact that the town is naturally fortified: it is at the centre of three concentric circles of hills. From

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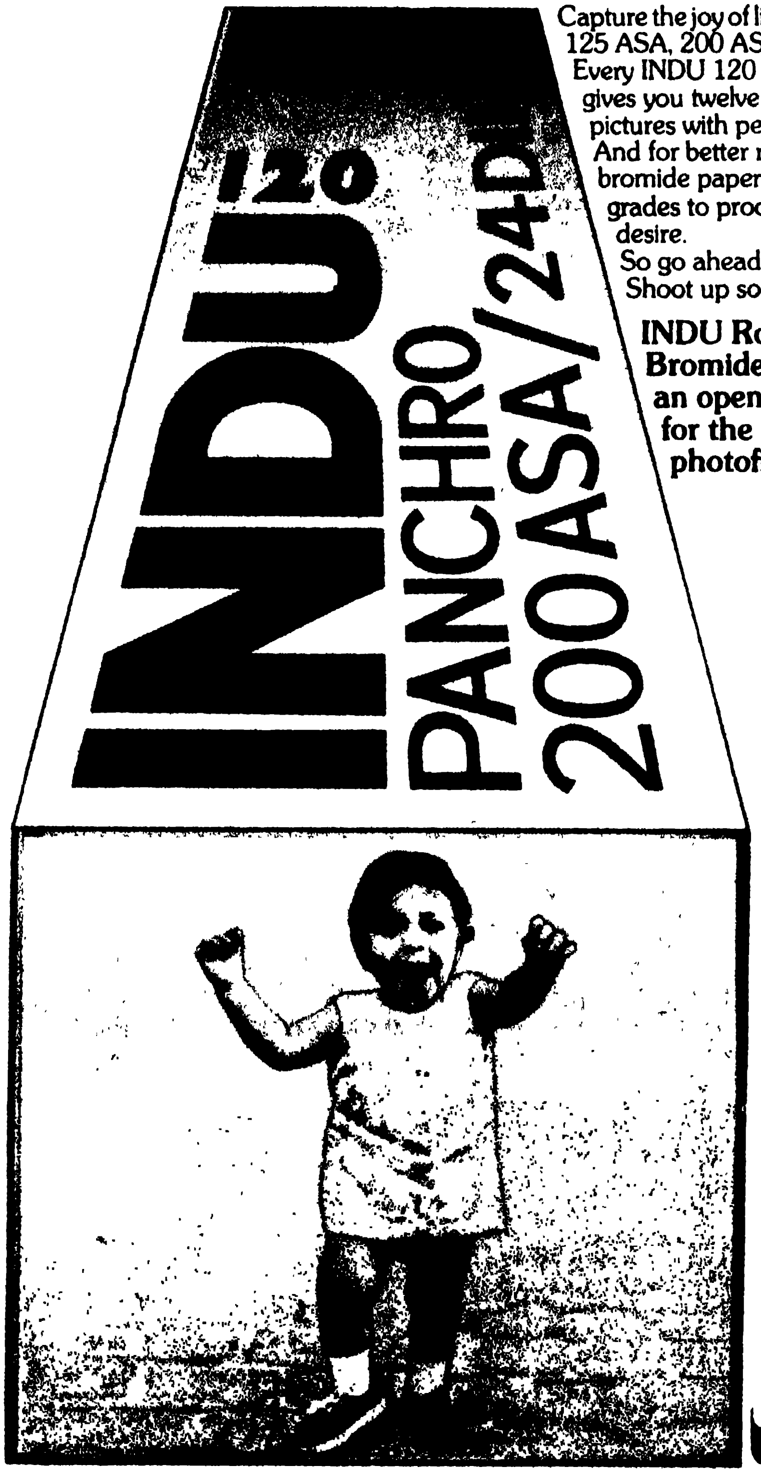

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A Moroccan tank destroyed by the Polisario Front

whichever way you approach, you would have to pass through hills well-guarded by Moroccans. And the weapons they use are sophisticated: T-54 Russian tanks with mounted machine guns, amphibians, armoured personnel carriers, 105-mm artillery. Over a dozen burnt-out tanks lie scattered. Says Chebani, who took part in the battle, "Our Land Rovers chased their tanks and destroyed them." The Moroccan morale must have been very low indeed!

You ask them if they have fought all these battles with captured arms and the answer is just one word: "yes." They show you the arms they have captured—made in West Germany, Soviet Union, France, South Africa and the US. They show you how the Moroccans tried to erase the "Made in South Africa" marks from some armoured cars, though the scratches are clearly visible. The Polisario have even captured a laser beam anti-tank gun and a mobile radar. If you still doubt their claims they introduce you to the Moroccon prisoners they have captured. Some are very young and over a hundred of them stand in three groups near a sand dune. Some were captured quite a few years ago and are now wearing clothes given by Polisario. They don't look like officers. Slightly away from them stands a very young, handsome man in a pilot's uniform. He doesn't speak English. You offer him a cigarette and he takes it happily. Someone else offers him another and he puts it in his pocket. Through an interpreter he tells you his name is El Mardi and he is 27-years-old. He was trained in France and was flying an F-5A when it was shot down by the Polisario at Ras El-Khanfra in Western Sahara on 27 December 1980. Has he been allowed to write to his family? He says yes. Is he being treated well? And the answer once again is yes.

If the Polisario claim that they have liberated 85 per cent of their country is true, then why have they not sent people from the refugee camps into the liberated territory? They say the moment they do that the Moroccans will start bombing the areas. "Our total population is just one million (a figure which the Moroccans say is not true). The Moroccans want to annihilate us so that there are no Saharawis left. If there are no Saharawis then there will be no fighting for Western Sahara." But why not consolidate your forces and attack the towns occupied by the Moroccans instead of capturing towns in south Morocco? "The best defence is attack. We do not lay any claims on Moroccan territory. We don't want to occupy south Morocco. But they must quit our territory. If Morocco goes on, we'll go deeper into Morocco. It is a legally defensive move to claim our territory."

After spending seven days in this desert without a bath, and having covered nearly 2,000 km of road-less territory, you feel quite convinced that "this nation is conducting a special experiment." They are fighting a war on one side, and building a new society in refugee camps on the other. But what they are asking for is recognition from the world. Countries like Libya, Algeria, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria have recognised the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic. And recognition for them is very important. "Any recognition will be an assisting force in our struggle and boost our morale."

Inspite of continued warfare, why is Morocco so keen on clinging onto this desert territory? "(Because of) the long Atlantic coastline and the natural resources which the Moroccans are exploiting," answers Mahmud Larosi. Western Sahara's proximity to Europe makes it important from the geostrategic point of view. The Polisario claim that the marine wealth along the Saharan coast is "one of the best in the world." Till very recently the Moroccons used to mine the phosphate in the region. Then the Polisario sabotaged the conveyor belt which carried the phosphate from the mines to the coast. Besides, on the Atlantic coast petroleum has been discovered, "and we already have a 27-point programme to tap the oil reserves." It is for these reasons that Morocco is not giving up this territory and why, probably, the war will continue. ■

Did Gundu Rao steal Rs 20,175?

And then quietly dispose of the file?

Bangalore: Even while the Rolex watch case (SUNDAY 5 April) still ticks ominously in the background, fresh accusations have been levelled against the Congress(I) ministry led by Mr R. Gundu Rao. Once again the charges have been brought by Mr A. K. Subbaiah, the prime mover in the Rolex watch case, against no less a personage than the Karnataka chief minister himself. In a public meeting here, Mr Subbaiah declared that a vital file which implicated Mr Gundu Rao in a Rs 20,175 misappropriation case had been conveniently disposed of during Mr Rao's file clearance drive last year.

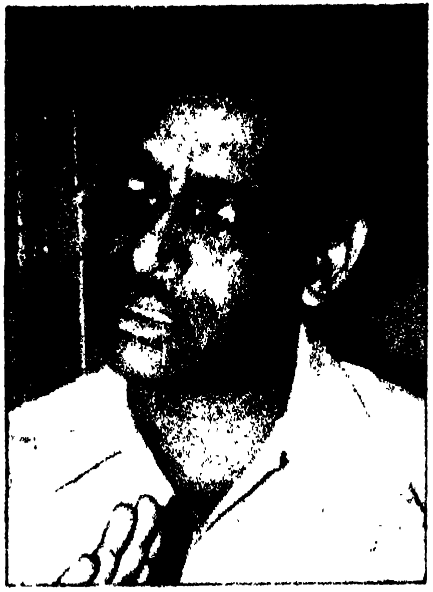
The case dates back to 1957-58 when Mr Gundu Rao, then 20 years old, was an employee of the Madikeri Town Cooperative Bank in Mercara, Coorg district. In 1959, shortly after Mr Rao resigned from the bank (he worked there for two years) the bank's audit revealed certain transactional irregularities for which it held him responsible. The irregularities included charges of replacement of pledged gold jewellery with imitation jewels and grant of loans without execution of bonds or entry into the case book. The total amount involved was Rs 20,175. At that time the bank's board of directors decided to institute criminal as well as civil cases against Mr Rao. Six cases of criminal breach of trust were initiated in October 1960 and in one case Mr Rao was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. Mr Gundu Rao appealed in the sessions court, got a stay order and stayed out of jail. In March 1962, the sessions judge ordered a retrial and this time Mr Rao moved the High Court for a revision. The other five cases, meanwhile, had been set aside. By then Mr Rao had also joined the Congress.

In 1971, Mr Rao, then a youth leader, took the side of Mr Devaraj Urs, the then Karnataka chief minister, against Mr Veerendra Patil. Mr Patil wanted to embarrass Mr Urs and decided to rake up the five remaining cases. Mr Rao stalled Mr Patil's move by appealing to the High Court with the plea that he was being harassed since a majority of the witnesses were either dead or not available. The delay almost killed the criminal proceedings but the bank still made efforts to institute an arbitration suit for the recovery of the money. The suit had initially been instituted in 1959 and till 1980 Mr Rao's name featured in the audit reports of the bank. There was enough evidence in the missing file to get Mr Rao in trouble, according to a source close to Mr Devaraj Urs. Many believe that the file had been kept hidden at the insistence of Mr Urs. Apparently, Mr Urs's first act after he became CM in 1972 was to remove the file.

The spectre of the file keeps haunting Mr Rao. In 1972 itself the file gave him a lot of trouble when he sought a ticket to the state legislature. The documents in the file were given to Mr Uma Shankar Dixit (then a treasurer of the Congress party) who visited Bangalore to select some candidates for the election, by the then Karnataka health minister, Mr Siddaveerappa, and his group who were opposed to Mr Devaraj Urs. The high command, however, ignored the charges and Mr Rao was selected as a candidate.

R. Gundu Rao

A.K. Subbaiah



Every time the charges were raked up, a vain search was started for the file. Till 1971, it was presumed that the file was in the possession of the court. In fact it has still not been found. In a recent press conference when the issue was brought up, Mr Gundu Rao said that his misconducts should not be raked up. He prefers to forget that criminal and civil charges were levied against him. He claimed that the people of the state had already exonerated him by electing him once to the Kushalnagar municipality and twice to the Legislative Assembly despite repeated efforts by interested parties to frustrate him.

Regarding the misappropriation issue, Mr Rao told the pressmen that public men had private lives and that privacy should be protected. Newsmen recall that Mr Gundu Rao did not deny Mr Subbaiah's allegation about the convenient disposal of the file. And Mr Subbaiah has already given notice that he will raise the issue in the Legislative Council when it meets on 22 June.

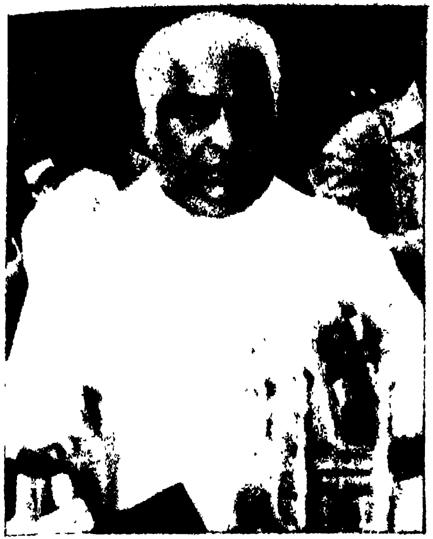
Louise Fernandes

TELUGU CONFERENCE

Mr Anjiah probes the bungle

Hyderabad: The Second World Telugu Conference (SWTC) held from 14 to 19 April 1981 in Kuala Lumpur, Malayasia became the centre of a controversy even before it was held. Now after its end, the controversy has deepened. The deputy chairman of the AP Legislative Council, Mr K. Keshav Rao, has publicly criticised the bungling that went into the organising and conduct of the SWTC. And many genuine delegates who could not make it to the conference have been blaming the SWTC, the International Telugu Institute (ITI) and the travel agent (who was to take them from Hyderabad to Kuala Lumpur) for "cheating" them. In the face of so much criticism, CM T. Anjiah had no other alternative but to appoint a senior IAS officer, Mr Dilsukh Ram, to conduct a "probe" into the travel arrangements for the delegates.

According to Mr Bhattam Sriramamurthy, AP's minister for cultural affairs, 936 delegates attended the SWTC of whom 808 were from the state. But according to reliable sources, more than 200 delegates were stranded at Madras. The number of "official" or sponsored delegates chosen for the conference by the AP cabinet sub-committee and the ITI was 265. This included 175 artistes, 60



T. Anjiah at the SWTC

scholars and 30 others including ministers, opposition leaders and government officials. The state government had sanctioned Rs 5.5 lakhs for travel arrangements of the "official" delegates which was enough to sponsor 110 people. The ITI gave Rs 2.5 lakhs and 50 more people were accommodated. Around 40 seats were available under the group travel scheme bringing the total to 200. This naturally created a problem for 65 official delegates left over to be accommodated. But this was no problem for determined free-trippers. According to the ITI chairman, Mr M. V. Krishna Rao, about a hundred seats were reserved for official delegates by an Air India flight on 13 April but as some VIPs brought their family members along with them, they had to be accommodated. About 40 seats were reserved on 15 April but representatives of the AP Youth Congress(I) gatecrashed and claimed they had priority over the artistes. The youths then took the plane and left for Kuala Lumpur. Later, the CM admitted that the decision of the APCC(I) to send 80 delegates of the APCC(I) and APYC(I) at the last moment was partly responsible for the mess.

Meanwhile, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has blamed Travel International (the official travel agent for the SWTC) for the Madras episode. It is said that the agent did not obtain the necessary approval for foreign exchange from the RBI. Neither was the agent able to book hotel accommodation for all the delegates at Kuala Lumpur. Recognising the muddle the chief minister has admitted that the main cause of the mess was the appointment of a single travel agent to handle all the delegates. Perhaps, to pacify those who could not go to Kuala Lumpur, Mr Anjiah has said that he was thinking of sending them to the Mini-World Telugu Conference to be held in Chicago in May. Said Mr M. V. Krishna Rao: "We will give Rs 300 to each of those delegates who faced hardships in Madras."

Syed Majeedul Hasan

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Value of arms received in 1974-78 in current million dollars

Supplier	**Recipients**		
	India	**Pakistan**	**China**
United States	30	130	—
U.S.S.R.	1600	5	230
France	30	240	20
U.K.	50	20	270
F.R.G.	10	10	—
Czechoslovakia	10	10	—
Poland	40	—	—
China	—	230	—
Canada	—	—	5
Others	40	130	10
Total	1810	775	535

Washington: India's per capita military expenditure is among the lowest in the world, but its net military expenditure is four times that of Pakistan. This is among the many findings of a report, *World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1969-1978*, published by the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. The report, released recently, is based on information available with the agency as of 31 March 1980.

India's per capita military expenditure in 1978 was $5 compared with $10 for Pakistan, $34 for China and a world average of $103. India's military expenditure in 1978, in constant 1977 dollars, was $3,394 million against $844 million spent by Pakistan. China, however, spent ten times more than India in 1978: China's military expenditure in 1977 constant dollars was $35,000 million.

India allocated only 3.2% of its gross national product (GNP) on military expenditure, against 5.1% by Pakistan and 8.5% by China, according to the report. However, while India's share of the military expenditure as a percentage of the GNP increased since 1969, when it was three per cent, that of China and Pakistan declined. In 1969, the military expenditure to GNP ratio for Pakistan was 5.9%, and that of China 13.8%.

In 1978, China's armed forces totalled 4.5 million, against India's 1.3 million and slightly over 0.5 million in Pakistan. But Pakistan had the highest percentage of its population in the armed forces: 0.63% against 0.45% in China and 0.2% in India.

India's arms imports went down to just $260 million dollars against $725 million in 1977. Pakistan imported $158 million worth of arms in 1978 against China's $65 million. In 1978, however, Pakistan's arms exports exceeded India's. Pakistan exported $27 million worth of arms against just $9 million by India and $130 million by China. In 1977, however, India exported $40 million worth of arms—a year in which Pakistan did not export anything.

Between 1974-78, India imported $1,900 million worth of arms: $1,600 million worth was from Russia. In the same period, Pakistan's imports totalled $775 million, mostly from France and China. China's own imports totalled $525 million, of which it received $230 million worth from Russia and $270 million from Britain.

Achal Mehra

FOREIGN RELATIONS

USA gave aid to throw out Kerala communists

Washington: Fear of communist influence and the victory of the communist party in Kerala prompted massive American contributions to India's second five year plan in 1958.

This startling fact is disclosed in a report of an executive session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May 1958.

The executive session was held to consider amendments to the Mutual Service Act of 1954. But, the minutes of the closed session were made public for the first time only this year.

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May disclosed that members of the subcommittee pushed through an amendment to the 1954 Act to make special mention of India even at the cost of hurting the feelings of Pakistan and Latin American countries. The amendment, sponsored by the then senator from Massachussetts, who later became the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, read: "The (US) Congress recognises the importance of the economic development of the republic of India to its people, to democratic values and institutions, and to peace and stability in the world. Consequently, it is the sense of the Congress that it is in the interest of the United States to join with other nations in providing support of the type, magnitude, and duration, adequate to assist India to complete successfully its current program for economic development."

The resolution, or at least a similar one in substance, was opposed by the state department because it singled out India. But the state department did say it wanted to make appropriation of upto $ 300-400 million for India's fifth plan. Senator Kennedy, who proposed the amendment, said it was aimed at rescuing India's five year plan which was floundering from lack of funds.

Several other senators however, supported the bill for less philanthropic reasons. Senator John Sparkman of Alabama thought the language of the bill, "might be a challenge to Soviet Russia." Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon had said, "I think it is a very helpful amendment in regard to our relations with the people of India because the threat of communist penetration in India is exceedingly serious. The communists already although it is a slight dominance, they nevertheless have a dominance in Kavali, which, interestingly enough, in the southern part of India, is the most Christian province in all of India. Indian leaders are greatly concerned about the communist penetration in Kavali. They have just elected a communist mayor up in Bombay." Senator Morse, who had visited India in December 1957, also wanted America to finance specific projects rather than make general loans. He had said: "We have poured millions of dollars into India. We hear very little about it, but I'll tell you what you do hear about. You hear about a couple of loans made to India, one by West Germany and the other by Russia for a couple of steel mills, which are a drop in the bucket compared with the amount of money the United States has spent in India... That is what Germany and Russia really did with the steel plants, and they have a great propaganda value out of it. I think whenever we get a chance to compete with Russia on this propaganda front, we ought to compete with her."

He said that the language of the bill would yield a "great deal of propaganda value," for America in this "economic contest" and the American Ambassador could tell India, "why the Congress of the United States made clear how we feel towards India."

Only Senator Kennedy stood by for India for relatively selfless reasons: "The first five year plan was successful and I think our whole position really hangs with the success of India in doing something about the problem of the standard of living of its people." The committee approved the amendment with only Senator Homer Capehart from Indiana opposing. The US government pledged $ 225 million to India in 1958 and in May 1960 signed a Food for Peace agreement with India for $ 1.276 billion worth of foodgrains to India—the highest ever on record.

Other startling testimony has emerged from the now disclosed records. In its meeting of 7 February 1958, Senator Morse told the committee that two defectors had been planted in the communist government in Kerala by the Congress party. Said he, "By hook or crook, they apparently have at least two members of the government that are willing now to throw their support to the Nehru forces, and that they are waiting until they have an issue for the overthrow of the communist government." Mr Allen W. Dulles, director, CIA confirmed this information adding that the Congress had not been averse to a communist victory in Kerala. "I think the original idea was, "Let the communists go in there for a time, they will make a mess of it and we will throw them out."

Mr Dulles also said, "We have in India a difficult situation in one state of Kavali. That state has a communist government and that communist government has gone in there with the idea of making that a garden spot. They have just deliberately gone in there and said they are going to correct every evil that existed in the past, and they have done pretty well."

CIA director Dulles acknowledged that the communists had outsmarted the Congress party and they had put through several popular measures. He said that since the communists had only 37 per cent of the popular vote, the communist government "just hangs on by a narrow margin there, and if these independents shifted over from the communists to the Congress party, that would shift the balance." Senator Morse also asked the State department to tone down criticism of India's five year plan as being an ambitious one since the subject was touchy with Indian officials. It would only be "driving them into the Russian orbit."

Achal Mehra

A tea estate manager is killed

J. Ower-Johnston

Darjeeling: Mr Gordon Jeoffrey Ower-Johnston (52), the last British proprietor of the biggest tea estate in the district, Rungmook and Cedar Tea Estate, was brutally hacked to death by some of his own workers on 28 April 1981. The reason: he had brought an injunction from the High Court preventing the government from taking over the garden.

The workers were dissatisfied with the way the garden was being run. The 14,000-acre tea estate had been showing signs of decay for the last three years, a feature common to the tea plantations of Darjeeling: low yield per acre, high cost of production, low per worker productivity and low profit margin. It had also lost tea crop worth Rs 13 lakhs between 1978 and 1980 due to severe hailstorms. This had aggravated the already precarious financial position of the garden. With practically no revenue generation, the garden was financially crippled. Matters came to a climax between October 1980 and March 1981 when the workers were neither paid their wages nor given susidised cereal rations.

About six months ago, the West Bengal government informed the garden's management that the garden would be taken over if the arrear rents were not paid. Mr Johnston paid little heed to the notice since he thought he would be served a second notice before the actual taking over was done as is customary under the Indian Tea Act. The six months' notice expired and the West Bengal Tea Development Corporation (WBTDC) officials arrived to take over the garden. The WBTDC officials were welcomed by the workers for they believed that their wages would be regularised and rations would once again be supplied to them. Meanwhile, Mr Johnston would not let the tea garden, his family had owned for three generations, be taken over. He moved the Calcutta High Court and got an injunction preventing the takeover.

On 28 April, he entered the garden armed with the injunction around 5.30 in the evening. Some workers apparently asked him to go back to his bungalow. He did, only to return with a revolver. A young worker confronted him with the question: "How will you pay us?" Pointing at some tea chests Mr Johnston said, "I will sell them and pay you." Quipped the young man: "But that is what you have been telling us for a long time." Someone else said: "Now that you are the owner again, why are you carrying a revolver?" Mr Johnston took out the revolver and said: "Take it then." Soon after, the lights went out. A spear whizzed through the air, struck Mr Johnston in the chest and killed him. But even before he fell on the ground, he was struck with sharp knives. His death naturally, caused a panic among the tea plantation owners of the area. The police swung into action soon after the incident and arrested over 50 people.

Tapash Mukherjee

NSCN guerillas join the PLA

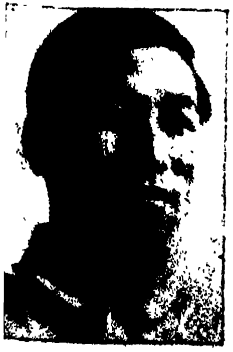
Kohima: Standing on a plateau on the rugged border separating western Burma from Manipur, a young man in military fatigues flashes a code signal—one long and two short flashes—at two minute intervals. The signals are meant for guerillas hiding in the clumps of tall grass and they are a warning to them to flee into Manipur's jungle covered east district.

The guerillas who keep on hopping across borders are Naga insurgents loyal to Mr T. H. Muivah, a Naga Maoist who is slowly becoming a dreaded name in this little state. According to intelligence sources, over hundred of his guerilla followers have entered Manipur and Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh with the [illegible] entering Nagaland in the near future. Their mission: to revive insurgency in Nagaland where secessionist armed struggle has almost petered out after the signing of the historic Shillong Accord of 1975. (The Accord was signed on 11 November 1975, between a five-member team of the Naga Federal Government and the north eastern states' Governor Mr L. P. Singh. The Naga team accepted unconditionally the constitution of India and promised to surrender their arms.)

Mr Muivah, described as an "amiable assassin," is a 44-year-old Tangkhul Naga graduate from Somdal village in Manipur's east district. Apart from organising the guerillas under him, he has pulled off a "protocol of understanding" between his National Socialistic Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) led by Bisheswar Singh (SUNDAY 3 May). He has also smuggled into Nagaland a bunch of assassins to kill a few overground and underground leaders.

Mr Muivah has started a new phase in the guerilla war with a bang. Said a top police official, "Nagaland is in for a summer of discontent." He was referring to the 27 April ambush at Manvakshu in the border district of Mon in which three persons including a Congress(I) MLA, Mr Nuklo Konyak, was killed. According to experts who know about insurgency in the area, the hook-up between the NSCN and the PLA adds a new dimension to the tribal insurrection in the north-eastern region. It was only in February that Mr Muivah felt an urgent need for a tie-up with the PLA. He had a reason: his guerillas were becoming targets for the crack 18 regiment of the Burmese Army. Accordingly, Mr Muivah sent an aide to meet Mr Thongon Kabichandra, Mr Bisheswar Singh's trusted confidant, to Lekei Imlong bazaar near Imphal to sign the "protocol of understanding." And the two outfits are cooperating: a mine set up by the NSCN blew up an army vehicle at Imphal on 25 April; it was their gift to the PLA.

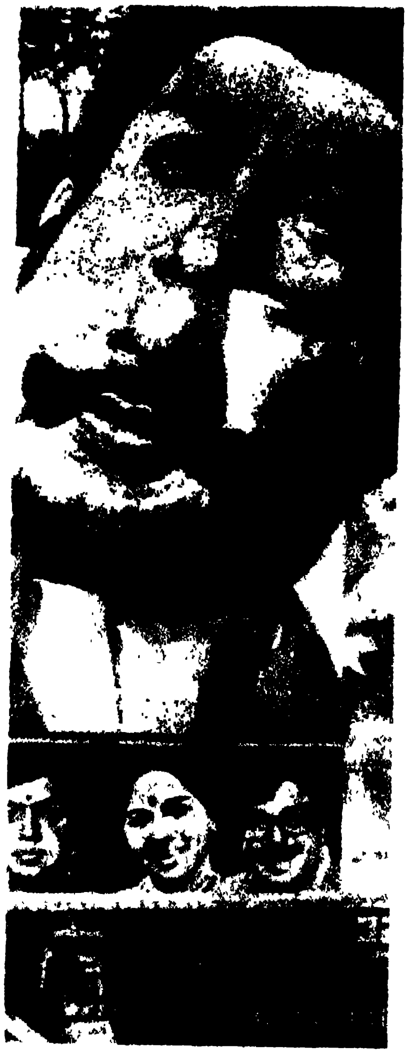
T. H. Muivah



Mr Muivah's activities have begun troubling Nagaland. And the authorities are taking no chances: the head quarters of the eighth mountain division near Kohima is being strengthened. On his part, Mr Muivah has to overcome an obstacle: the growing opposition from the pro-Phizo Christian Angami, Chakesand and Khiemungan Nagas. How he will get over the obstacle is yet to be seen. Said a Congress(I) MLA at Dimapur despairingly, "The scenario of Nagaland for the rest of the year is definitely bad and we may even see Nagas fighting against Nagas—of course, to the glee of the home ministry."

Santanu Ghosh

Brush with the lens



SHASTRI VEERABHASKAR

Painter Husain's collage of a Sivaji Ganesan film, Rakta Pasam

Madras: A couple of years back, Mr Prabhudas Patwari, the then Governor of Tamil Nadu, decided that the gaudy, obscene, multi-coloured posters and hoardings of Tamil and other south Indian films allover the city had to be done away with. Apart from making several speeches on the issue, he almost succeeded in getting MGR's government to pass a bill to censor the posters. At around the same time, a 65-year-old man, barefoot and wearing a dark shirt was seen going around the city with an expensive Japanese camera slung across his shoulders. Occasionally this man would stop in front of film hoardings and click. Though very few people recognised him, this man was none other than the internationally renowned painter, M. F. Husain.

The results of Mr Husain's work was seen recently in Madras when he put up a small exhibition of photographs of cinema posters called *Culture of Streets*. This, however, is a harbinger to bigger exhibitions to be put up in metropolitan cities all over the country.

Why did Mr Husain choose film posters in Madras as his subjects? His explanation is very simple: in Bombay, hoardings and posters pale into insignificance because of the vast number of multi-storeyed buildings—the concrete jungle. And in Calcutta, he thinks, the posters are neatly pasted and far more sober than the ones in Madras and Bombay. It was the riot of colours and brazen vulgarity which he found in posters in Madras that made him spend six weeks in the city. He was a bit disappointed, though, at not finding any hoarding advertising an MGR film. And he certainly wasn't amused on finding Sivaji Ganesan looking down at him from a larger-than-life hoarding. This, according to Mr Husain, inspired him to do a collage of photographs of Sivaji Ganesan posters. Said Mr Husain: "I made his head look bigger because he has a big head."

Mr Husain also visited the artists who make posters and hoardings. This reminded him of his early life—his struggle as a young commercial artist—and he got an artist to make a sketch of him (Husain) working on a poster. This he photographed and the photograph is now one of the prize items at his exhibition.

Arthur Pais

KHAAS BAAT

What is the reason behind *Padmini Kohlapure's* sudden rise to popularity? Her two nude scenes in *Insaaf Ka Tarazu* and *Gehrayee*, of course! Moviemakers now feel that they can make her do whatever they want in their films. Indeed, her "thus far and no further" conditions are so lax that a compromise will not be difficult to make. Apparently, heroes are beginning to discover a lot in Padmini. So, even those with steady girlfriends are spending a major part of their time with Padmini.

Rekha is chewing her nails, losing weight and showing every other sign of frustration. The grapevine has it that the Rekha-bug is finally wearing off. Poor Rekha, she is getting so desperate that she is inviting herself over for meals at the *Bachchans'* place. *Jaya*, far from creating a fuss, is acting the ideal housewife and giving Rekha all the attention and consideration she is dearly in need of at the moment.

Padmini: a favourite with the heroes

DURGAPRASAD

DURGAPRASAD

Jaya: still the ideal

Gaurav and his *Love Story* are in for a test, following the release of *Rocky*. Almost everybody is of the opinion that *Sunjay* will easily outshine Gaurav. And if that is not enough, then there is *Tina* and her sex-appeal that can easily outweigh the wooden charm of *Vijayeta*. Strangely enough, all this rivalry has not filtered down to the heroes of the two films. Sunjay and Gaurav are on the best of terms and are planning to work together in the remake of *Mother India*.

Shatru's hands are a little sore these days with all the shaking and pumping that it has to endure. Reason: everybody is greeting him, although hardly anybody has checked to see if he has really secretly married *Reena* or not. And Shatru's reaction: he guffaws in his customary style in answer, so no one really knows the truth However, someone very close to the actor insists that Reena has always been the most important person in the actor's life Whether it is true or not, Reena is wearing the same smug look that *Hema* has on her face these days.

***Naseeruddin Shah*, the unassuming super actor, recently got married to *Ratna Pathak*, daughter of the film-and-stage artiste. *Dina Pathak*. Like everything else that he does, Naseeruddin got married quietly, without the usual filmy fuss. In fact, the whole affair was so quiet that even the people of the industry—who knew that the two were hopelessly in love with each other—did not know that the marriage had taken place. Of course, now that the word has got around, there is probably going to be demands for an official reception with the usual trappings. But knowing the couple, it hardly seems likely that the celebrations will ever be forthcoming.**

Naseeruddin: the quiet worker

JAYANTA DAS

KHAAS BAAT

Rajkumar and Ponni in Shoolam

What's gone wrong with *Deepa?* She seems to be totally fed up with the film industry which has been her bread and butter for so long. Surely there are reasons. Could it be the treatment she got at the hands of the cameraman in whose residence she turned up only to be turned out politely in the middle of the night? Deepa had gone to the cameraman-friend's residence after a bitter quarrel with her mother. Could it be that the upcoming Malayalam actor she had fallen in love with does not like her anymore? Now she has decided once and for all to wash her hands off people of the film industry. She wants to get married to a college lecturer. Her choice has, perhaps, something to do with her professed love for studies.

Madhavi

R*athi Devi* is determined not to turn into another *Meera* of the film industry. Meera had started her career with a sober role in a film directed by *K. Balachander*. But the film was nothing of a super hit, so Meera went on a stripping spree. Unfortunately, her overexposure did little to help her career. Rathi Devi had of course, started her career with sexy exposures, but her fears of turning into a Meera are probably unfounded: her film *Pappathi* has been released in Singapore and Malaya. The grapevine also has it that some of the scenes censored for the Indian audience have been grafted on the version sent to Singapore. Perhaps this explains Rathi Devi's invitations to cultural programmes in the country.

Despite her good looks, *Vijayashanti* is not doing well in the south. After her failure in Tamil films, she switched to Telugu films. For a while things looked bright for her, especially after she was signed opposite *Krishna*, the famous hero of the Telugu industry. Unfortunately, the film never took off, so Vijayashanti has to be satisfied only with the small roles she is getting these days.

Vijayashanti: the south did not treat her well

Actor *Rajnikant* is suffering from a severe bout of depression. *Kazugu*, released on the eve of his marriage, has flopped, inspite of the extraordinary opening scene. To make matters worse, some of Rajni's producers have switched over to *Kamalahasan*. And Kamalahasan has three hits in a row, not to talk of *Raja Parvai*, his first home production that has become the talk of the town. Perhaps the hero has enough reasons to be depressed, and the fact that he has over half-a-dozen potential hits on his hands is small consolation.

"Take care of liquor, take care of 'related activities' and there is nothing like movie business." That is *Sivaji Ganesan's* advice to young people who want to enter the film industry. And the veteran star should be knowing: "I tried several business ventures: everything flopped, but movies had kept me going on." Indeed, the star himself had innumerable obstacles, disappointments and 'accidents'—as he calls his flops—and yet he continues to believe that an artist or producer should never be demoralised.

PIOUSJI

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THE WORLD

Briefly

Friendly?

The society for American travel writers has voted Britain the "most friendly country in the world for American tourists" outside the American continent. Responding to this compliment, a spokesman of the British tourist authority said: "All our own research over the years has shown that the friendliness of British people is one of the country's biggest tourist attractions." Now if only the British were as friendly to the immigrants and the Irish.

World War II is over!

"The war is over. Throw down your arms. There is no longer any enemy." This message from the Japanese government was recently sent deep into the jungles of Solomon island near Papua New Guinea. It was conveyed with the help of 100,000 leaflets which were airdropped in an attempt to contact Japanese second world war soldiers who have been cut off from civilisation and are still attacking the local inhabitants of the island, unaware that their war ended 36 years ago.

Traffic rules for debating

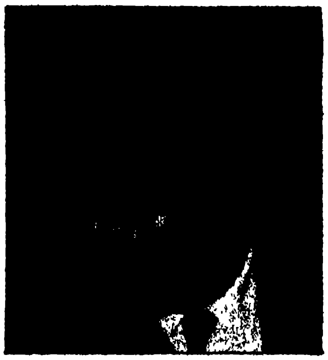
'Traffic lights' have been installed in the debating chamber of Portugal's Parliament. Reason? To cut short unnecessary speeches by members and to ensure that debates do not run beyond schedule. The lights glow green when a member is using his allotted speaking time, turn amber a minute before his time is over and red when he has overstepped his limit. f he continues speaking hrough the red light, his micophone is automatically cut off after 30 seconds.

From suits to soups

Celebrated French fashion designer Pierre Cardin is buying over the equally celebrated Paris restaurant, Maxim's. And not everyone is very happy about this. Robert ourtine, food critic of the prestigious French paper *Le Monde*, remarked: "If Maxim's becomes anything like Cardin's dresses, then I hate o think of the effect."

Was Nasser corrupt?

Egypt's Deputy Prime Minister Osman Ahmad Osman, who is also related to President Sadat by marriage, has created a furore with his autobiography. The references to late President Nasser's malpractices amd misuse of power in Osman's book have forced its withdrawal from circulation. President Sadat himself, while denying that he had encouraged Mr Osman to write the book, has appointed a parliamentary committee to enquire into the matter. And meanwhile, one of President Nasser's sons-in-law Dr Ashraf Marwan (who allegedly amassed a fortune during his father-in-law's term in office) has threatened Mr Osman with legal action. Another son-in-law of the late President, Hatem Sadek and his wife Hoda issued a joint statement saying that the only inheritance which Abdel Nasser left behind was an "unlimited area of good deeds and love which remained in good hearts."



Operation foetus

The brain of a human foetus was operated upon six times in the course of nine weeks by Dr Frederic Frigoletti of Brigham and Women's hospital in Boston (USA). The foetus was suffering from neo-natal hydrocephalus and its exact position in the womb was determined by ultrasonograms (sound X-rays). A hollow needle was then inserted through the womb into the foetus' skull and excess spinal fluid from the brain was drawn out. However, Dr Frigoletti admitted that too much fluid had been extracted, as a result of which, when delivered, the baby (a boy) turned out to be mentally retarded.

Underworked

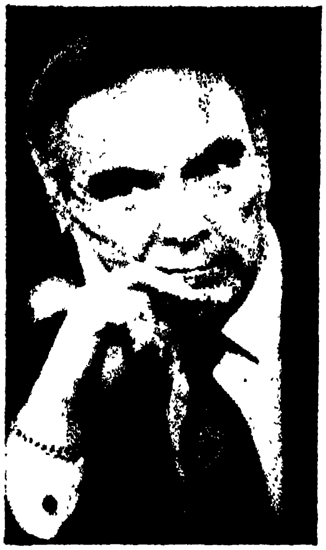
Now!, the magazine which paid its staff the most lavish salaries on London's Fleet Street, lived by the following motto: "If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys." Well, proprietor Sir James Goldsmith paid gold and still didn't get much more than monkeys. The magazine closed down on 27 April. On that very day, journalist Tony Rocca, who had been appointed deputy news editor, turned up in office to join the staff of *Now!* He answered two telephone calls before being told that he was redundant since the magazine had been wound up; and for his few minutes of work Rocca will be paid £15,000 under the contract.

Giscard's "drug ploy"

President Valery Giscard d'Estaing

The release of French "drug godfather" Urbain Giaume (67) from prison at a time when the Presidential election fever was running high in France, was Mr Giscard d'Estaing's way of discrediting his Gaullist opponent, Jacques Chirac. Giaume had served only six years of his 15-year sentence for shipping a ton of heroin worth £ two million to the USA from a laboratory in Marseilles; he was released, according to French minister of justice Alain Peyrefitte, on medical grounds. The truth, however, was explained by the Paris-based paper *Le Matin:* President Giscard wanted the "drug godfather" to be free, in the hope that he would cause sufficient embarrassment by reviving his old links with mayor of Nice, Jacques Medecin who, for long a staunch Giscardian, recently switched his support to Jacques Chirac.

Long-term designs

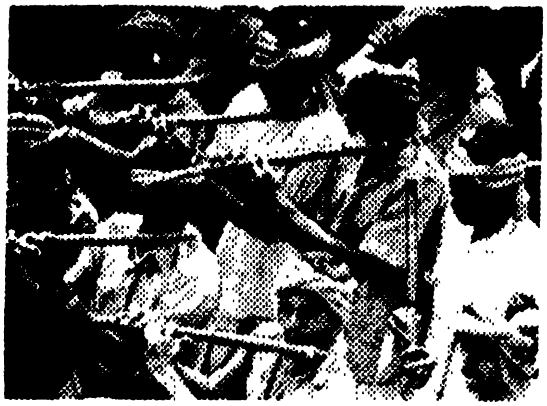


Secretary of state General Alexander Haig

US secretary of state Alexander Haig has been busy allaying the Israeli fear that the five American Awac radar surveillance aircraft being sold to Saudi Arabia can spy on Israeli military movements and collate radio intelligence. Mr Haig, in an unprecedented move, received 30 American-Jewish leaders recently at the state department and explained that the Awacs were meant to enhance Saudi air defences and not to threaten Israel. When the delegation sought his assurance that American personnel would be sent along with the aircraft to ensure that they are not misused, Mr Haig complied And later, White House officials confirmed that roughly 500 US personnel would be involved in maintaining the Awacs in Saudi Arabia for at least 20 years.

25 years ago, a farmer's life was a lone battle with nature.

Today, with State Bank on his side, he has reason to celebrate.



When the monsoons were unkind and the crops had failed, a farmer would be driven to the very edge of despair. By the weak cries of his hungry children and his wife's anguished tears.

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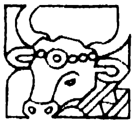
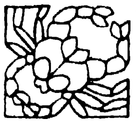
Beginning 24 May

ARIES (15 April—14 May) You must take the initiative and start a new venture. The time is favourable to build new contacts. Those of you in service may be presented with an opportunity. Try to remain cool. Do not take unnecessary risks in your business affairs. Your domestic front may create problems This is the time to go on a foreign tour **Good dates**: 24, 25 and 29. **Lucky numbers**: 1, 3 and 7. **Favourable direction**: East.



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) You may have to face problems in your business affairs But fresh contacts will revive your spirits Financially, the time is good for you. Youngmen will make progress in the affairs of the heart A good prospect on the professional front is indicated. Your relatives and friends may find themselves in trouble. **Good dates**: 25, 27 and 29 **Lucky numbers**: 2, 4 and 6 **Favourable direction**: South

GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This will prove to be a successful week for you. Affairs related to your heart will make steady progress You are advised not to take risks. The time is favourable for any kind of competition Your domestic front will be calm Young men will benefit from some unexpected source Your health may create problems. You will have a good time in your place of work **Good dates**: 26, 28 and 30. **Lucky numbers**: 2. 8 and 9. **Favourable directions**: North and east.

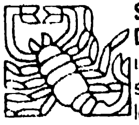


CANCER (15 July—14 August) Financially, this will prove to be a good week You will meet someone who will help you in your affairs There may be cause for anxiety You may suffer from ill-health Students should try to secure foreign scholarships Those of you in service must exercise caution while dealing with your employers. This is the time to take up a new venture. **Good dates**: 24, 28 and 29 **Lucky numbers**: 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction**: West

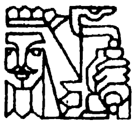
LEO (15 August—14 September) You may face problems on your professional front. You may create complications through your own fault Exercise caution while you proceed with your work You will benefit through someone, provided you exercise tact You will face trouble on your domestic front You are advised to exercise caution in speech **Good dates**: 24, 27 and 30 **Lucky numbers**: 3. 4 and 7 **Favourable direction**: North-west.

VIRGO (15 September—14 October) You will experience a good time on your professional front You will benefit through someone in the beginning of the week Do not take risks in your business affairs The time is favourable for young men Your reputation will be enhanced Your health may create problems The time is not good for romance **Good dates**: 25. 27 and 28. **Lucky numbers**: 4. 6 and 8 **Favourable directions**: East and south

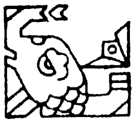
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) You will be encouraged on all fronts Do not be hesitant, for this might prove to be a hindrance You will gain money through an unexpected source You will make steady progress on your business front This is the time to start a new venture Those of you in service may get help from your employers Political activists may face problems **Good dates**: 24, 26 and 27. **Lucky numbers**: 3. 5 and 9 **Favourable directions**: West and south



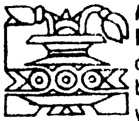
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Your sphere of influence on the professional front will expand leading to fulfilment of your aspirations You may be disturbed by your enemies, but they will not be able to do you any positive harm The last two days of the week are unexpectedly favourable. Young ones will receive good news Courtship and marriage are well signified **Good dates**· 25, 29 and 30 **Lucky numbers**: 2. 8 and 9 **Favourable direction**: North



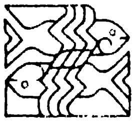
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Devote yourself to some charitable work You will be praised for your activities. Unemployed people have a fair chance of getting jobs You will face trouble in your matrimonial affairs Someone close to you may disturb your mental peace. Elders will prove to be helpful in your moments of crisis **Good dates**: 25, 28 and 30 **Lucky numbers**: 3, 7 and 8. **Favourable directions**: North-west and south.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) The first half of the week is favourable for you. You will be successful in your business affairs provided you exercise tact and caution. You may have to spend an anxious time over one of your family members. Take care of your health You are advised not to indulge in political activities Avoid taking unnecessary risks **Good dates**: 24, 25 and 26 **Lucky numbers**: 1, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction**: East



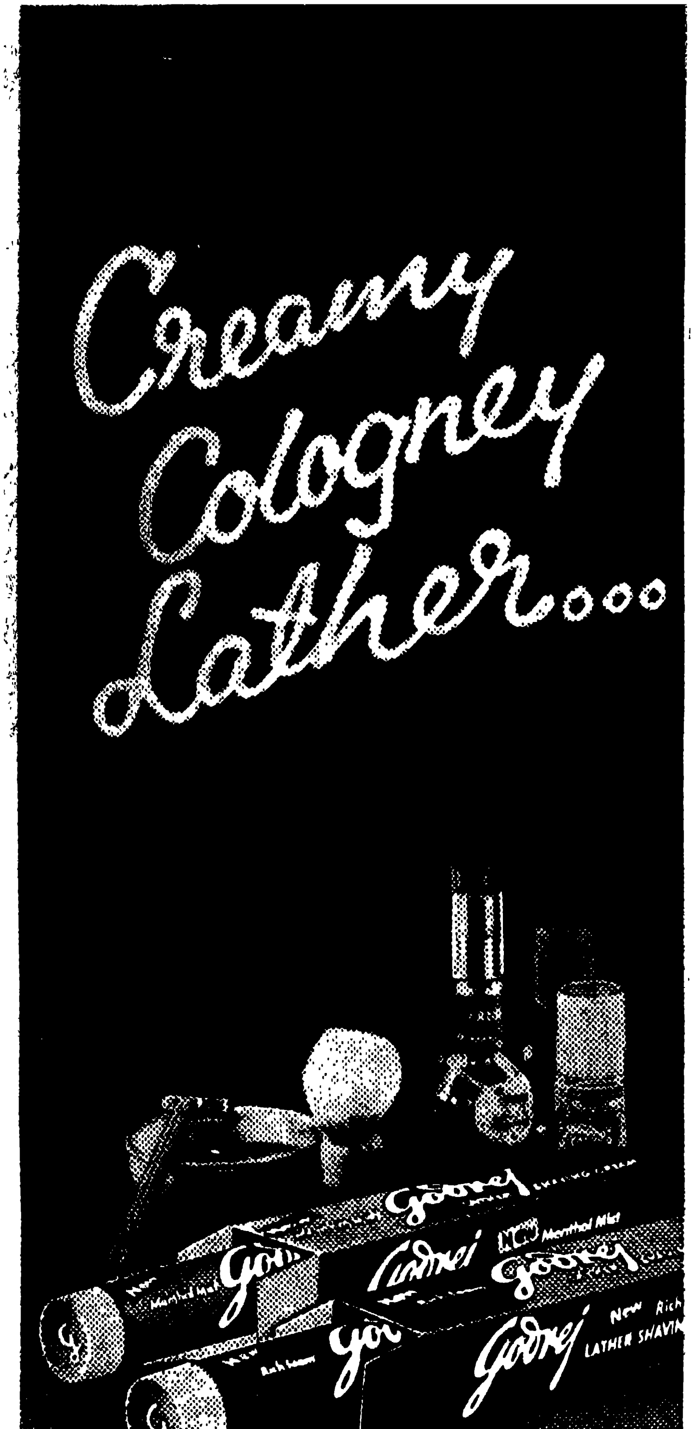
AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This week is particularly favourable for businessmen Health of your spouse may cause anxiety You may gain financially through some dubious means Your enemies may create problems Try to sort things out coolly This is the time to go on a journey You may change your residence A promotion is likely **Good dates**: 27, 29 and 30. **Lucky numbers**: 2, 4 and 6. **Favourable directions**: East and south-east



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This week your activities will prove to be fruitful. The time is favourable for creative work. Do not be nervous while launching a new venture. Someone in a superior position may prove to be helpful Young ones must take initiative You will gain financially, provided you are careful in your investments Letters will bring good tidings **Good dates**: 26, 28 and 29. **Lucky numbers**: 3, 6 and 7 **Favourable directions**: West and south.

Political forecast for Mrs Gandhi: Mrs Gandhi is going through a bad time since 10 February, 1981 This will continue till September, 1982. The period between 24 July, 1981 and 26 September, 1982 is particularly unfavourable During this period Mrs Gandhi may face problems on her domestic front. She might get upset over news concerning her son, Rajiv Gandhi. She might also experience depression and frustration in her personal life She might take an important decision regarding constitutional amendment and administration. Mrs Gandhi may suffer ill-health It is essential for her to take utmost precaution in her movements Her life might be in danger.

AMRITLAL



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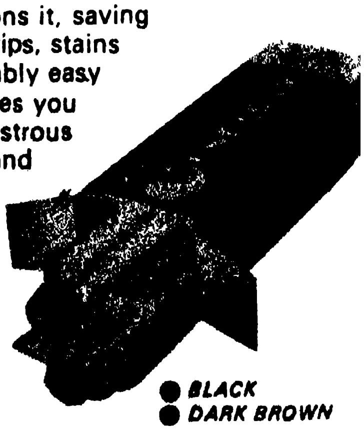
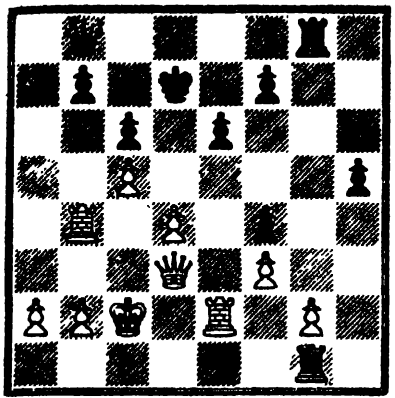


- ● *BLACK*
- ● *DARK BROWN*

WONDERAX—the largest selling cream hair dye.

chess

Larsen (Black)



Karpov (White) to move
Position after Black's 33rd move

All good things . . .

It is sad to hear that next year's IBM tournament in Amsterdam will be the last For the chess world Amsterdam and IBM are as inseparable as Wimbledon and strawberries and cream. Even if a new sponsor comes along and the annual tournament does survive, something will still have been lost

As some compensation, this year's event was organised on a larger scale than usual and the final IBM next summer is being planned to be something very grand indeed The premier group of the 1980 IBM was an eight-player double round event (quite rare these days), won by the irrepressible world champion Anatoly Karpov with a score of 10 out of 14. Holland's Jan Timman pressed him hard for much of the time but finally had to settle for second place a point adrift.

In tournaments Karpov really is supreme and in Amsterdam he displayed all his customary authority His only loss was to the Hungarian grandmaster Zoltan Ribli, a very instructive game which I shall give next week Of his seven wins the following must for Karpov have been the sweetest, revenge for his defeat by Larsen in Montreal just over a year before

White: A. Karpov. Black: B. Larsen
Caro-Kan Defence

1. P—K4, P—QB3. Most people play the Caro-Kan for a draw. Larsen plays it to win

2. P—Q4, P—Q4; 3. N—Q2, P x P; 4. N x P, B—B4; 5. N—N3, B—N3; 6. P—KR4, P—KR3; 7. N—B3, N—Q2; 8. P—R5, B—R2; 9. B—Q3, B x B; 10. Q x B, P—K3; 11. B—B4, KN—B3 Theory recommends 11 . Q—R4+ and if 12. B—Q2, Q—B2 It is normally considered too dangerous to leave white in command of the diagonal KR2—QN8.

12. O—O—O, B—K2; 13. P—B4, P—QR4; Oh. how Larsen loves to push his rook's pawns!

14. K—N1, P—R5; 15. N—K5, N x N; 16. B x N, Q—R4; 17. N—K4, O—O—O; 18. P—B5, N x N; Black is now forced to exchange, or else the knight comes to Q6

19. Q x N, B—B3! 20. B x B On 20 B—Q6 Black can play 21. . R x B; 22. P x R, R—Q1 with a very, very solid position

20. . . P x B; 21. Q—B4. The heavy piece ending is very difficult to evaluate Probably White stands better as his king is more secure.

. . . P—B4; 22. R—Q3, R—Q4; 23. KR—Q1, Q—B2; 24. Q—Q2, P—B5; Leads to very interesting play. White's kingside pawn becomes weak, but Larsen will have to abandon his beloved QRP.

25. R—QR3, R—N1; 26. P—B3, R(4)—N4; 27. R—N1, R x RP; 28. R x P, Q—N1; A strange move. 28. . . K—Q2 looks safe.

29. R—K1, R—R7; 30. R—K2, R—R8+ 31. K—B2, P—R4; 32. Q—Q3, K—Q2; 33. R—N4, R—KN8? An unfortunate choice. After 33. . . Q—B2 the position would still not be clear.

DIAGRAM

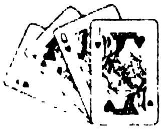
34. P—Q5! A typically Karpovian piece of opportunism, exploiting the momentarily unguarded position of the black rook on KN8.

. . . BP x P; If 34. . . KP x P; 35. Q—B5+ exposes the king.

35. P—B6+! K x P; 36. Q—N5+ Resigns. The next move is Q—B5+ or Q—N6+ winning the stray rook on KN8.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



The Proprieties (in the Duplicate code) contain a sentence to the effect that it is improper to observe the place from which an opponent draws a card. If you suspect that an opponent makes a habit of this, is it wrong to lay a small trap for him? Similarly, if you think an opponent is peeking, is it wrong to place a pseudo-singleton at the edge of your cards? Most people would say not, but this deal from the Pairs Olympiad raises a much more controversial point:

Dealer, South. Love all.

West		North / South		East
		♠ A Q 7 5 3 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ 8 3		
♠ 9 6 ♥ J 9 7 ♦ 10 9 ♣ J 10 6 5 4 2	W	N S	E	♠ 8 2 ♥ K 10 8 5 4 ♦ A K J 6 3 ♣ 9
		♠ K J 10 4 ♥ Q 2 ♦ Q 7 5 ♥ A K Q 7		

French international Dominique Pilon opened 1NT as South, and since it seldom pays to go through the Stayman procedure when you are 5-3-3-2, North raised to 3NT. West led the Jack of clubs and South won with the King.

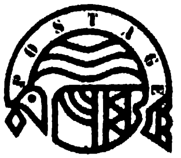
Pilon noted that on any lead but a diamond Four Spades could hardly fail. Expecting most pairs to register 420, he adopted a remarkable ruse to achieve 430. At trick 2 he ran the Jack of spades, which to West may have looked like a finesse. Then, as *Le Bridgeur* puts it, *'il laisse tomber sur la table la carte voisine du valet de pique qui se retrouve être le 7 de trèfle'* In other words, he followed the Jack of spades with the adjacent card in his hand, which was the 7 of clubs. West thought that South had pulled the wrong card and that his partner held ♣ Q 9 x; so he played low, and Pilon had his overtrick

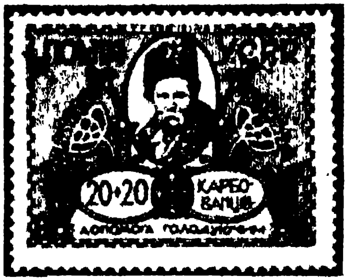
Clever, but was the manoeuvre entirely ethical? Is it fair to deceive in any way by the *manner* in which a card is played?

On the same general subject, there has been discussion in *Bridge World* editorials about the notion of deliberately playing slowly in order to cause opponents (who have already been in 'time trouble') to incur a penalty. The editor declared: 'It is *not* in itself an impropriety to prolong play unnecessarily.' The theory is that it is a player's right, almost his duty, to adopt all permissable procedures to improve his team's chance of winning. Kaplan says that of course such action is disagreeable, but that it is the tournament organisers who are to blame.

TERENCE REESE

stamps





Like the countries of northern Europe which had been part of the Tsarist empire, the Ukraine seized the opportunity offered by the defeat of Russia in the First World War to declare its independence This was on 22 January 1918 and six months later the new republic began issuing its own stamps Independence was short-lived and after making an alliance with Russia in 1920 the Ukraine joined the Soviet Union in July 1923 The last Ukrainian stamps, printed in Berlin, had been issued a month earlier They comprised a series of four values sold at a premium to raise funds for famine relief The 20 plus 20-karbovanetz stamp (above) portrayed the 19th century Ukrainian poet, Tara Shevchenko

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1 Apart from being a gum that is chewed by millions, what is Bubble Gum?

2 What is absolute dating in geology?

3 The basic technique in Black Comedy is to shock the audience with violent juxtapositions both in language and incidents dealing with death, mental illness, murder, sexual perversion and so on The style is valuable especially in satire. Who is responsible for popularising Black Comedy?

ANSWERS

1 Rock music in its most commercialised form It was produced from the late 1960s for the sub-teen audience Its artists and material include the 1910 Fruitgum Company, Ohio Express with *Yummy, Yummy, Yummy*, The Osmonds, the Archies and others

2 The term is applied to a method of dating whereby tests establish the age of a fossil in terms of years "before present" or "b p " "Present' is taken as the year 1950

3 Joe Orton (1933-67) Among his works are *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (1964), *Loot* (1966), *Crimes of Passion* (1967) and others.

this india

prize rs. 30 for the entry given first

MADRAS: A shower of currency notes from the 14-storeyed LIC building on Anna Salai caused a traffic jam this morning (30 April) as passers-by tumbled over each other to grab what they could It happened around 11 a.m. when an LIC employee was counting his salary on the sixth floor. As he was suffering from 'Madras eye' and needed the extra sunlight to count the money, he stood near a window. A sudden gust of wind pushed out the currency notes from his hand and sent them down through the window. The floating notes attracted passers-by who sprinted after them. Vehicular traffic came to a halt. Eye witnesses said people waiting to see a morning show at a nearby cinema left the queue and rushed towards the falling notes, some of which flew as far as the Indian Overseas Bank building. The hapless employee meanwhile raced down the staircase. All that he could retrieve out of the Rs 506 he had in the pay packet was a single ten-rupee note—stuck on a windowsill high above one's reach—*Hindu* (Dhanpat Agarwal, Tadepalligudema)

NEW DELHI: The language barrier between Mr Zail Singh, union home minister, and Mr A. G. Kulkarni (Congress-U) who was in the chair, provided light moments when a call-attention motion on a constitutional crisis was being discussed in the Rajya Sabha. Mr Zail Singh sympathised with Mr Kulkarni for being in a difficult position when a call-attention motion on the constitutional crisis in Assam was raised. But the manner in which he put it seemed to embarrass Mr Kulkarni. Speaking in Hindi, the home minister said: "*Aap phanse hain* (You are in a fix)." Since the word *phanse* in Marathi means "deceived" as Mr Kulkarni himself explained, he would not accept it. "No, I am not deceived. But I am in a difficult position." Mr Zail Singh said he was "sympathising with him out of affection." Mr N. K. P. Salve (Congress-I) said the word *phanse* meant one thing in Marathi and another in Punjabi. When Mr Zail Singh was replying to Mr K. C. Pant (Congress-U) Mr Kulkarni said that he was *qabil*. The home minister gratefully accepted the compliment saying that it was rare to get it from political opponents. "You are clever and that is what I meant," Mr Kulkarni clarified. But Mr Zail Singh would not part with the compliment on the plea that it was now a question of Mr Kulkarni's *izzat* (honour). The vice-chairman gave up—*Statesman* (Pannalal Paul, Maibang)

JAMNAGAR: A quarrel over food between a man and his wife ended in their 12-year-old daughter being injured in gunfire. The incident took place in Vanana village in Jamjodhpur *taluka* of Jamnagar district, the police said. According to the police, Kayun*ji* wanted millet cakes with vegetables for lunch, but Narmada had *chappatis* ready when her husband came home for lunch. After an exchange of words the man seized his gun and before he fired Goung Bhanu, the daughter, came in between and was hit as her father pulled the trigger. The girl was admitted to hospital in a serious condition—*Statesman* (Rama Kanta Sahu, Bhubaneswar)

NEW DELHI: The presence of foreign matter in a dish served to a VVIP at a Hyderabad House party has led to the wholesale transfer of the ITDC staff to various hotels of the corporation. A metal nut or nail was said to have been found in the *dal* served to the VVIP. The minister for civil aviation and tourism, Mr A. P. Sharma who was apprised of it, ordered an enquiry into the episode and eight members of the kitchen staff were placed under suspension. Not satisfied with the action, Mr Sharma is understood to have told the chairman of ITDC, Mr S. K. Mishra, to transfer the entire staff from the Hyderabad House, including the manager who was recently promoted on an ad hoc basis—*Hindu* (S. Rajasekaran, Madras)

An air hostess recently shocked the passengers on an Indian Airlines flight when she asked them to fasten their belts as the plane was about to "fall" in Indore. The passengers heaved a sigh of relief when the aircraft landed without mishap. They came to know only later that there was never any danger. The air hostess's anglicised Hindi had created all the confusion and scare—*Times of India* (Usha Gupta, Delhi)

NEW DELHI: Two senior officers supposed to be working at the aluminium project at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra were passing their time selling grass and mangoes. This was disclosed in the Lok Sabha by Mr Bapusaheb Parulekar (Janata). Mr Parulekar said the foundation stone of the project was to have been laid by the Prime Minister on 2 October 1974 and invitations to the function had been sent out. But the Prime Minister could not keep the engagement. Because of the government's inaction, the project was hanging fire for the last four years. Mr Parulekar said if the government did not want to go ahead with the project it should return the land acquired from agriculturists—*Times of India* (Kanwardeep Singh, Dehra Dun)

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik.

without comment

I wish the Prime Minister a long life and many more years during which I can criticise her and oppose her with all the strength at my command—Piloo Mody, Janata Party member in Lok Sabha

The problem in this country is the older generation—A. G. Kulkarni, Congress(U) member in Rajya Sabha

We have torn open the mask of the Congress(I). Let those who had not still known the party, know its character—Jyoti Basu, West Bengal CM

Ideology must be met with ideology and not pistols—A. K. Anthony, Congress(U) leader

Whenever Mr Vasantdada Patil talks of taking political *sanyas*, the throne of the one in power in Bombay begins to shake—Sharad Pawar, Congress(U) leader

I have not lost my sense to leave the Janata Party—Morarji Desai

We will not permit anyone to play with our fate. Anyone questioning the individuality of the state or its interests could only do so over the bodies of the Kashmiris—Sheikh Abdullah, Jammu and Kashmir CM

Our only hope is Rajiv Gandhi and he should join politics—Hasan Ahmed, president of the All-India Muslim Youth conference

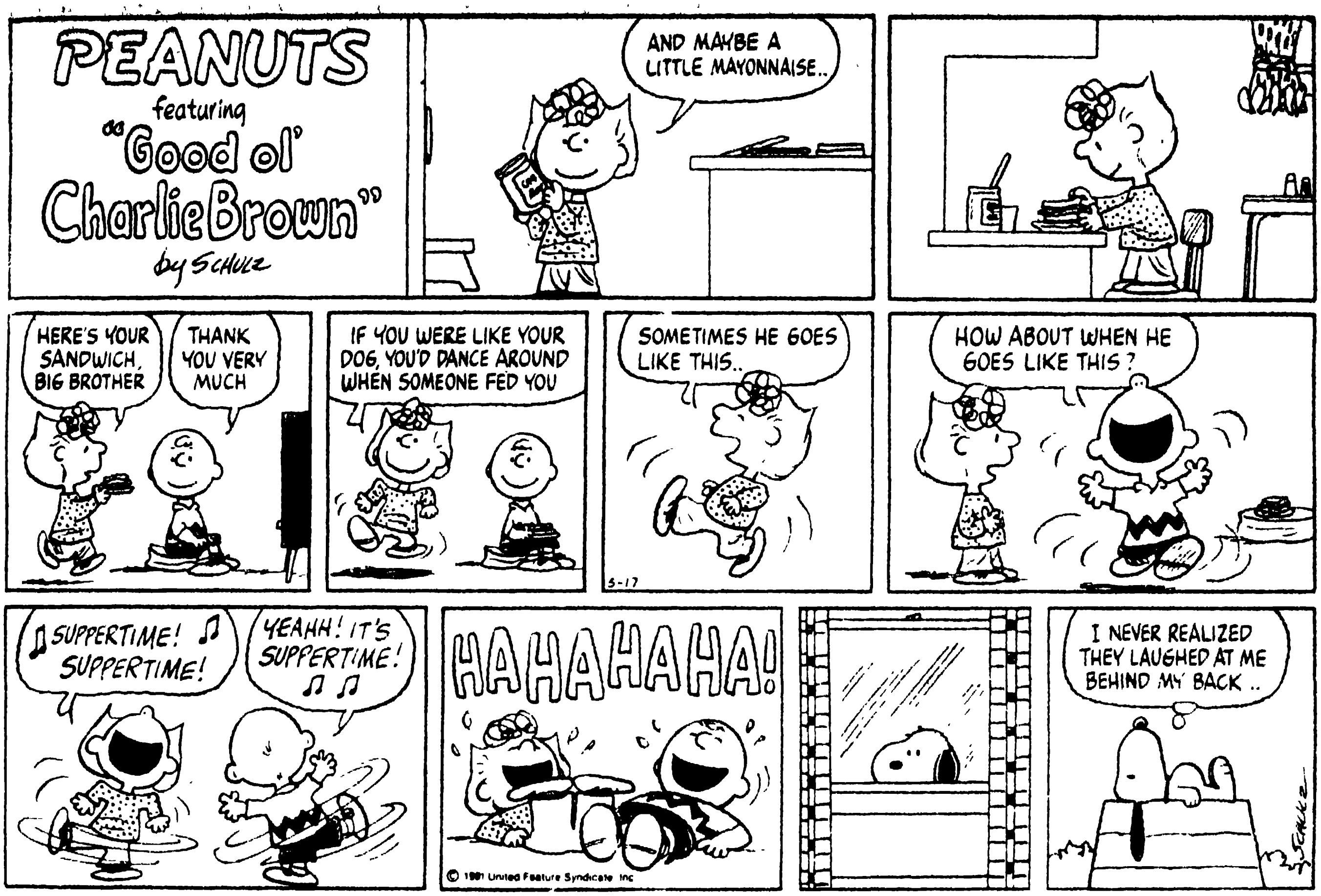
No one can see him (Rajiv Gandhi) control the levers of Parliamentary form...it is much more complex than an Avro engine—Ram Jethmalani, Janata Party member

How many things can he (A. R. Antulay) do simultaneously? If he wants to bring out newspapers why can't *National Herald* be brought here (Bombay)? Solanki*ji* has also planned to start *Herald* from Ahmedabad—Mrs Gandhi

(Sheikh Abdullah is going back) to his old game of arousing Kashmiri chauvinism in inciting peace-loving people of the valley against the centre—Dr Karan Singh, former union health minister

There is no need to get angry with the Press. We should not nurse any grievance against it—Chandra Shekhar, Janata Party president to his partymen

The people who led the country in revolt were mainly fighters, relentless and courageous men of action. Today we need tacticians, people able to win by seeking concessions and stepping back—Lech Walesa, leader of the Polish independent trade union, Solidarity


PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol' Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ
AND MAYBE A LITTLE MAYONNAISE..
HERE'S YOUR SANDWICH, BIG BROTHER
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
IF YOU WERE LIKE YOUR DOG, YOU'D DANCE AROUND WHEN SOMEONE FED YOU
SOMETIMES HE GOES LIKE THIS..
HOW ABOUT WHEN HE GOES LIKE THIS?
5-17
♫ SUPPERTIME! ♫ SUPPERTIME!
YEAHH! IT'S SUPPERTIME! ♫ ♫
HAHAHAHAHA!
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I NEVER REALIZED THEY LAUGHED AT ME BEHIND MY BACK ..
SCHULZ

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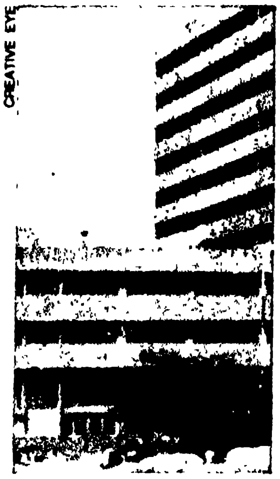
PM'S SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE


RAW headquarters

CREATIVE EYE

MRS Indira Gandhi is streamlining her intelligence network. The RAW office is now housed in an ultra-modern building on Lodhi Road in New Delhi. The joint intelligence committee is back with the PM's secretariat. (During the Janata and Lok Dal regimes it functioned under the cabinet secretariat.) The current head of the Intelligence Bureau is an old family loyalist. While these official agencies are working overtime, she does not rely only on them. After her defeat at the'77 polls which she contested on the intelligence advice that she was likely to win, she is making things doubly sure. Mr R. N. Kao, the former RAW chief, now heads a private outfit she has created. The other senior officer who retired recently from the RAW, Mr Shankaran Nair, is also associated with this venture. Mr D. Sen, former CBI chief, joined the duo on 26 April this year. The three now form the squad that operates as Mrs Gandhi's private eyes and ears. Mr R. N. Kao has recently returned from a tour of the state capitals, undertaken to contact 'committed' men in the various subsidiary intelligence organisations. Intelligence reports are now sent by this private network straight to Safdarjang Road, in addition to the official reports that come from the IB headquarters at North Block.

WRECKERS IN BIHAR JANATA

WHATEVER was left of the Janata party in Bihar is fast disintegrating. According to a Delhi-based senior Janata leader from Bihar, a "gang of five" is working hard to bring about this disintegration. The gang consists of former ministers Basawan Singh, Muneshwar Prasad Singh, Deonarayan Yadav and Baidyanath Mehta and former Chief Minister Ram Sunder Das. Their prime objective is to dethrone the state party president Satyendra Narain Singh. This "gang of five" has been organising district level rallies of party workers and setting up a parallel party machinery all over the state. The "gang" travels together, camps together and operates together. Among the five, Basawan Singh is the most vocal. He has charged the national leadership of the party with complete inaction in Bihar matters. Interestingly, both the camps owe allegiance to Mr Chandra Shekhar. He will soon have to choose between Mr Basawan Singh and Satyendra Babu for the leadership of the party in Bihar.

VIBHAG AMONG CONG (I) WOMEN

A two-day seminar organised by the *mahila vibhag* of the Congress(I) was grist to the mill of journalists looking for instances of groupism and rivalry in the ruling party. The *mahila vibhag* was split into two virtually warring camps, one led by Mrs Vidyavati Chaturvedi and the other by Mrs Rajendra Kumari Vajpayee (niece of Mr V. C. Shukla), the party general secretary. Mrs Chaturvedi was, however, not fighting her own battle but that of a deputy minister, a personal friend of hers. There was open discrimination even in the choice of speakers. It is only intervention by Mrs Ramdulari Sinha, union minister of state for labour, which saved the situation somewhat. Otherwise there would have been open war.

TRUST GEORGE

YOU can trust the Lok Dal leader, Mr George Fernandes, to leave the government dumbstruck. On 29 April, Mrs Gandhi was replying to a question in the Lok Sabha regarding the detention of the 27-year-old Irish activist and British MP, Mr Bobby Sands. She took a dig at the British government and appealed to Mrs Margaret Thatcher to accede to Mr Sands's demand, adding that she had made the same request through diplomatic channels. Mr Fernandes suddenly stood up, thanked Mrs Gandhi for the stand she had taken, and appealed to her to release the Naxalite leader, Mr Nagabhushan Patnaik, who has been under detention for the past ten years and is seriously ill.

NO LONGER A CLOSE ADVISER?

MR Abdul Ghani Khan Choudhuri, energy minister, is rather dejected these days He tried to advise Mrs Indira Gandhi on what should be done in West Bengal He wrote two letters to her. one before the *bandh* call given by the West Bengal Congress(I) and another after the *bandh* was over His first letter was full of critical remarks against the two prominent West Bengal Congress(I) leaders, Mr Ashok Sen and Mr Ajit Panja, Pradesh Congress(I) president Mr Choudhuri accused both of them of not understanding, the political realities in West Bengal and misleading Mrs Gandhi totally. He went further and said that the Congress(I) should not participate in the agitation against the Left Front government in West Bengal because of its inherent organisational weaknesses in the state. He alleged that the Congress(I) did not even have an effective cadre. Its ranks had been infiltrated by some marxists who acted as agents provocateur and brought the party into disrepute.

After the *bandh* he wrote another letter, claiming from personal knowledge that a youth was killed in a Congress(I) factional fight and not because of the agitation He also requested the PM to allow him to issue a statement condemning the violence and pointing out that the state government had deliberately withdrawn buses and trams even though damage to them was minimal. And, according to him, the Left Front government could do so only because of the unwise policies of Mr Ashok Sen and Mr Ajit Panja. But he was aghast to see in the papers the next week that Mrs Gandhi had given the green signal to her partymen in West Bengal to continue their stir against "Marxists oppression." This total disregard of his advice was a direct snub to him.

TAILPIECE: Overheard in Delhi after the union home minister's visit to Bombay to do an on-the-spot study of the alleged sabotage of the PM's plane: "Whether there was a danger to the PM's life or not may be difficult to ascertain, but *Makalu* certainly realised the danger it was in and flew off to Singapore before Gyani*ji* reached Bombay."

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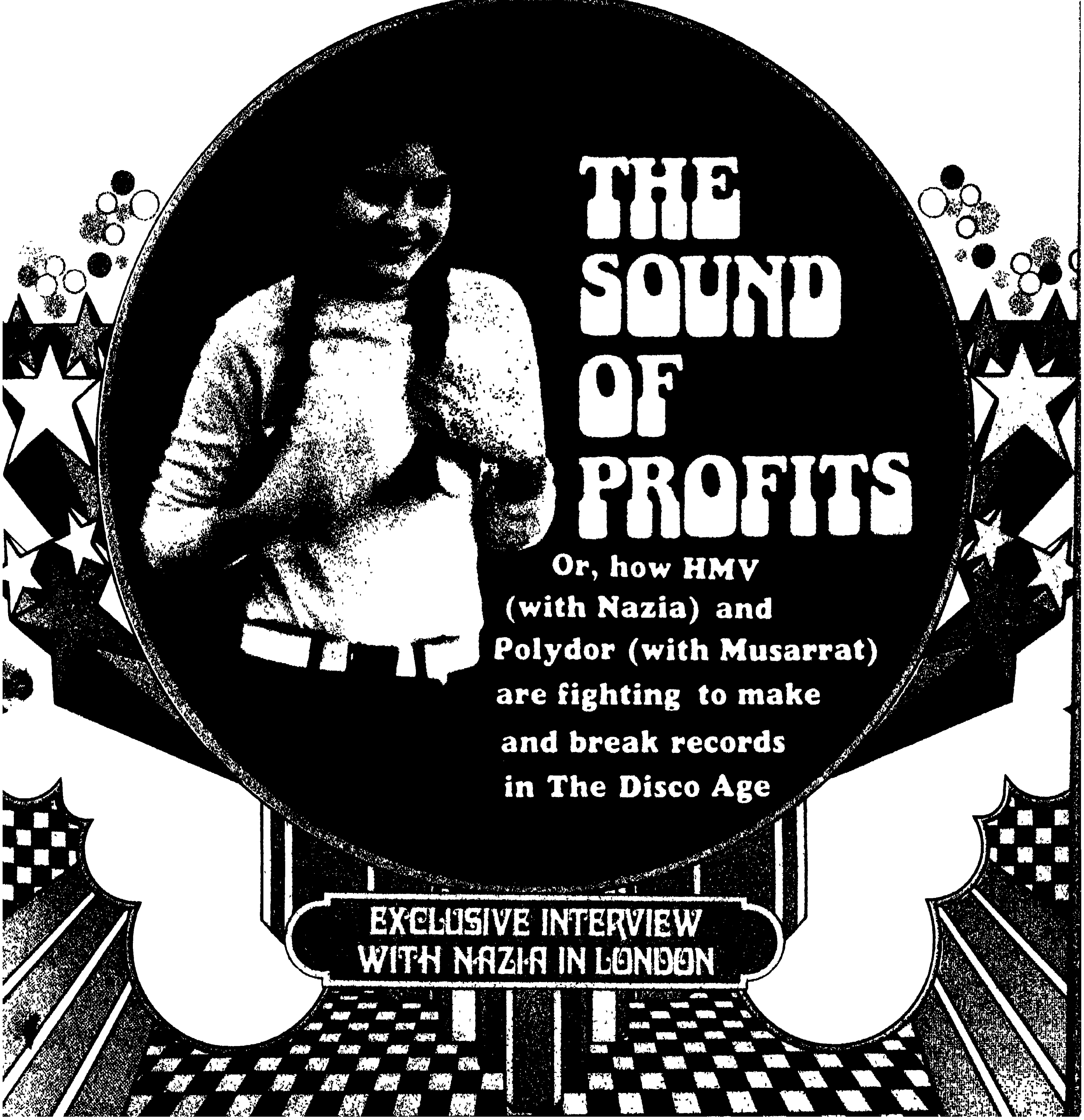
SUNDAY

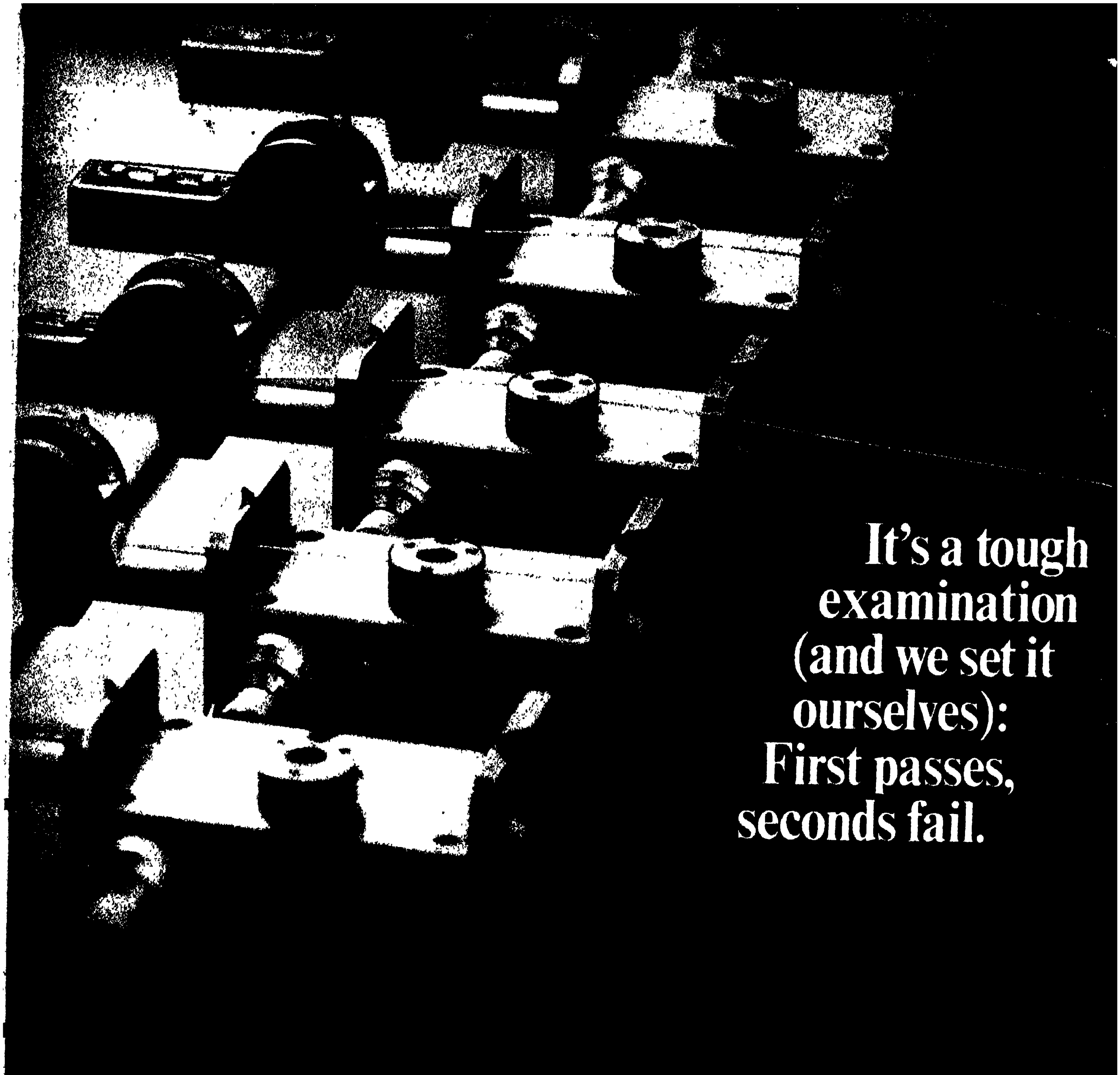
BIHAR SHARIF:
RSS spreads its poison again



THE SOUND OF PROFITS

Or, how HMV
(with Nazia) and
Polydor (with Musarrat)
are fighting to make
and break records
in The Disco Age

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH NAZIA IN LONDON



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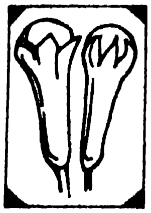
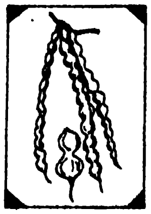


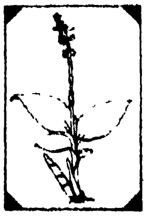
1. Clove Oil stops gum pain

2. Tumbru stops mouth odour



3. Babbul heals mouth ulcers

4. Peepal kills tooth bacteria



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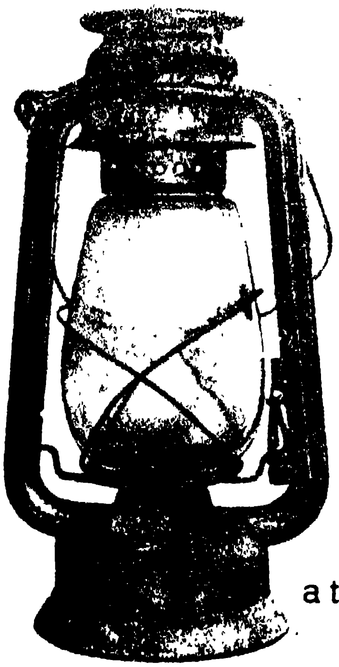

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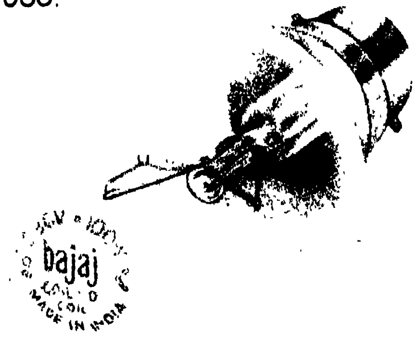

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SUNDAY VOLUME 8
ISSUE 38
RS 1.50
AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

May 24, 1981

An insignificant brawl in a country liquor shop at Gagandiwan village in Biharsharif district led to a six-day holocaust in which, according to official figures 52 people died, 50 of them Muslims Who stoked the flames of communal passion and whose was the hidden hand? The RSS played its familiar role but the incredible callousness of the Bihar government must take a big share of the blame. A detailed report by Tooshar Pandit. **Page 12**

Fifteen people were murdered in Kerala in a single week's bloody political warfare between the RSS and the CPI(M) in early April. This revived memories of 1959 when the country's first popularly elected communist government in the state was overthrown. Will history repeat itself? **Page 32**

Nazia and Zoheb Hassan. the singing sensations and Biddu the genius composer. have taken the Indian disco music scene by storm but what kind of people are they in the privacy of their homes? Ashish Ray interviews them in London Also SUNDAY correspondents file frontline stories on the record-making and breaking war between HMV and Polydor to capture the Indian disco music market **Page 22**

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The Government

Cloud over engineering exports

The much-publicised scheme to give price protection to engineering goods exports is yet to get off the ground. It was conceived in the wake of the 20 per cent increase in the prices of iron and steel, needed to manufacture engineering goods. Under the scheme, export contracts entered into till 9 February—the day iron and steel prices were raised—would be fully protected from the increase. Exporters were also assured of steel supplies at international prices through reimbursement of the difference between international prices and stockyard prices. Details of the scheme were announced on 23 March and the commerce ministry forwarded its proposals to the finance ministry for approval. But the latter is taking its time over it as the scheme would entail an additional expenditure of Rs 36 crores. An ambitious export target of Rs 1,150 crores for engineering goods has been set for 1981-82. But if nothing is done to restore the competitiveness of Indian engineering exports, affected by the recent rise in iron and steel prices, then the 1981-82 target will not be met.

Heaven born forget others

Officials belonging to the 'Central Secretariat Service' (CSS), as it is referred to, have become pawns in the hands of members of the IAS. The establishment officer concerned in the home ministry is yet to draw up a panel of officials from the CSS who have become eligible for their next promotion. The panel was to have been formed in May 1980 to promote about 40 officials from under secretary to the deputy secretary level and about a dozen officials from deputy secretary to the director level But even after the lapse of a year there is no sign of action by the home ministry. This is in sharp contrast to the practice with IAS officers who get promoted to the next post 'automatically' on 1 May every year.

Vital drug imports delayed

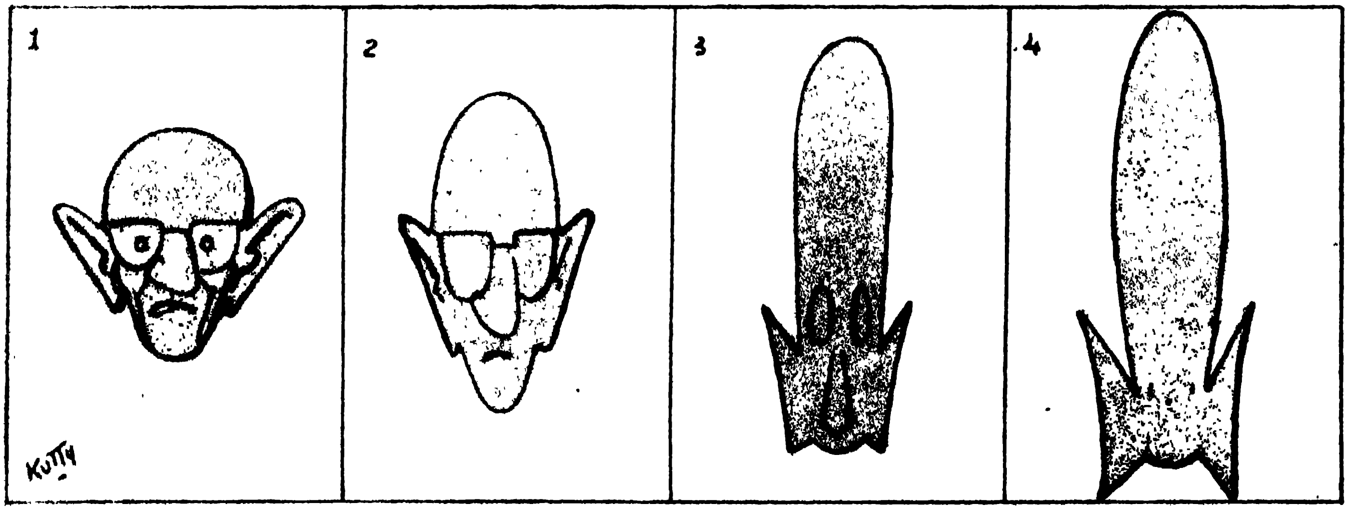
The first month of this financial year (1981-82) is well passed but the ministry of petroleum and chemicals is yet to announce its policy for the import of critical drugs and chemicals by the State Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals Corporation (CPC), an STC subsidiary. It takes a minimum of 30 days for the CPC to plan its imports and it takes a further two to four weeks for the samples of drugs to be tested in the national laboratories to establish their usefulness for the general public. The CPC is already flooded with requests from the industry for the import of various drugs and chemicals to supplement indigenous production. The industry is unhappy at the delay with the CPC but the latter can do little in the absence of policy guidelines from the ministry.

The qualification that matters

The key qualification that enabled Mr P. K. Shunglu, a senior executive of the State Trading Corporation, to become executive director seems to be the fact that he is a Kashmiri brahmin. Initially he was six months short in experience for getting an interview call for the job. This difficulty was overcome by postponing the interview by six months! In becoming executive director, Mr Shunglu has superseded at least one senior executive, Mr B. C. Malhotra. Mr Malhotra had been with the STC since its inception. He has now proceeded on three months' leave with no intentions of rejoining the STC. Mr Malhotra's virtual departure comes close on the heels of several others, leaving a big vacuum at the top. The vacuum is made worse by the fact that the organisation also does not have a chairman.

Costly second thoughts

It is rather strange that the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) should now order two jack-up rigs from the same Singapore firm, Robin Shipyard, whose earlier offer it had rejected two years ago, and that too at a far higher price than initially quoted. The "Robray 300" type jack-ups, originally priced at $ 44 million, will now be bought at $89 million. According to reports, the Singapore firm is not very sound financially. In effect, the ONGC will be bailing it out with this order. These jack-ups are expected to be delivered by the end of next year. It is also strange that even though the ONGC knows the parties from whom the jack-ups can be procured, it has decided to purchase the equipment through intermediaries. So the latters' commission gets added on.



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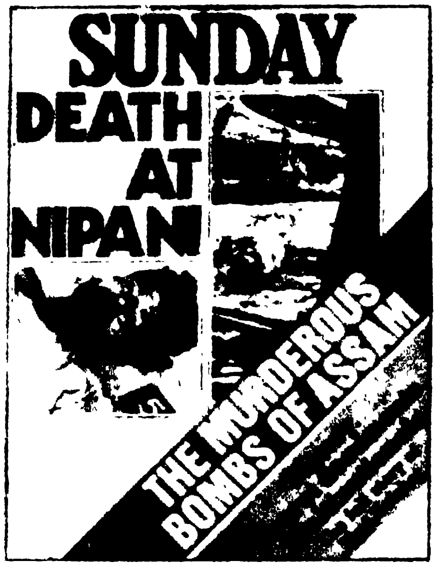


Government of guns

It is obvious from *Death at Nipani* (26 April) that Mrs Gandhi's government and other Congress (I) state governments want to meet the demands of farmers with gunfire. But judging from history, has such a method of tackling a nation's problems ever succeeded?
Ektar Ali Khan, 24 Parganas, West Bengal

It is said that India belongs to the farmers. This is absolutely wrong. This country belongs to capitalists and a barbaric police force whose job is to attack the poor.
Wajid Ali, Howrah

It is astonishing that after 33 years of independence, farmers are still deprived of their due. The farmers' demands are entirely justified: their income should increase in proportion with those of industrial workers and other employees; farming should be financed and developed in the same way as education, health and other welfare departments.
Samir Som, Howrah

Killing the dying

The stolen bombs of Agra (5 April) provided excellent information about the bomb explosion in the Agra Bartan Bhandar. Have things in Gandhi's 'non-violent India' reached such a pass that dying men are forced into gunnybags?
Amir Ahmed, Hyderabad

Degrees for fees

Professional colleges (*Karnataka's money-spinning colleges*, 19 April) have become a source of easy money, not only in Karnataka but in other parts of the country too. Poor students cannot afford admission to these institutions because of the huge capitation fees. The government should prohibit capitation fees and check such corruption.
V. P. Thonte, Solapur

Socialism?

We are a nation sinking between extravaganzas and poverty. A large percentage of the population lives below the poverty line. There are millions in our cities whose daily earnings do not cross Rs two. Thousands of villagers do not have food, clothing and shelter. Yet we spend Rs 200 crores on space adventure, Rs five crores to make a film on Gandhi, Rs 65 lakhs on our MPs' foreign jaunts, Rs 2,000 crores for colour TV, Rs 250 crores for conducting the Asian Games, and so on. Is this socialism?
A. Srinivasa Murthy, Bangalore

The fault-finders

Aligarh's communal student leaders (1 February) was superb. I myself happen to be one of Aligarh's students and I do not think anybody could have described and explained the recent hooliganism in the university any better. In Aligarh, there is an obnoxious parade of fault-finders.
M. Aalley, Hyderabad

The report clearly shows your magazine's marxist leaning. I think all those who have accused AMU students of communalism definitely have some personal grudge against AMU and the Muslim community. I feel that the statements by the President, Mr N. Sanjeeva Reddy, PM Mrs Gandhi, former PM Mr Morarji Desai and other leaders in praise of the role of AMU students during communal riots should be enough to convince these self-styled secularists.
Ahmed Ali Khan, 3, Akbar Market, Civil Lines, Aligarh

Raped, molested?

Your coverage of events in the central university of Hyderabad (*The case of the amorous professor*, 8 March) is full of factual errors. There was no disturbance of peace by "the shrieks of a 25-year old girl who was allegedly made a victim of amorous advances of a middle-aged professor." Nothing like this even happened here and even the concerned research scholar did not make this allegation when she met the vice-chancellor for the first time. After listening to her when the vice-chancellor promised to talk to the concerned dean and arrange for a change of guide, the girl went home visibly satisfied.

Again, the girl did not hand in a written complaint when she met the vice-chancellor on 8 March 1981 (reported as 9 March 1981 in your journal). For reasons best known to the students only a xeroxed copy of her complaint against Prof. H. N. Singh was handed over to the vice-chancellor nearly two hours after the *gherao* of the vice-chancellor and the six deans had already begun on 9 February 1981. The letter of complaint does not contain any allegations of rape or molestation as suggested by your correspondent.

Your correspondent also mentioned that the "aggrieved girl" was examined by the judge holding an enquiry into the incident. The fact is that the "aggrieved girl" never appeared before the judge in spite of repeated calls from the university authorities.

Your correspondent also states that Prof. H. N. Singh was sacked from Benaras Hindu university and Ravi Shankar university (MP). He was never sacked from anywhere. He came to the university of Hyderabad on deputation from Varanasi. How could a man who was sacked from BHU come here on deputation? So far as Ravi Shankar university (MP) is concerned, he never worked there. So the suggestion that he was sacked from there is totally baseless.
S. D. S. Chibber, President, Teachers' Association, University of Hyderabad

Syed Majeedul Hasan replies: My description of the incident involving the girl student Anasuya Rout and Prof. H. N. Singh was based on the information of a research student who claimed to be one of those who rushed to the laboratory after hearing the student's shouts. The students do not want to be named for fear of being marked down in their examinations by the professors. It is for Mr Chibber to state the basis of his denial/contradiction of my account of the incident.

Secondly, the girl did make a written complaint when she met the vice-chancellor—whether in xerox or original is immaterial. The students' plea is that they did not want the original complaint to remain in the vice-chancellor's office due to suspicions that it might be tampered with at the instance of Prof. H. N. Singh's supporters. The letter did not mention that "he was exceeding his limits." I did not suggest or imply that the girl had mentioned "rape or molestation" in her letter.

One official of the university had told me over the telephone that the "aggrieved girl" had been examined. A week later the authorities claimed in a press note that the two girls who had earlier discontinued the course had recorded their statements before Justice V. Parthasarathy, making certain allegations against Prof. H. N. Singh. They clarified that Anasuya Rout had not appeared before the judge in spite of repeated calls to do so. But the girl denies that she got even a single telegram or message from the university to appear before Justice Parthasarathy.

A number of students had claimed that Prof. H.N.Singh had been suspended for "similar incidents" at BHU and Ravi Shankar University. One professor even corroborated the students' claim to me. But if this was in fact not so then I stand corrected.

Correction, the name is...

May I point out a small mistake in *Former headmistress enters US politics (News,* 26 April) about Ms Kanak Dutta, a former headmistress who has announced her candidature for a New Jersey Assembly seat on a Democratic Party ticket, which means a lot to us? Ms Dutta is referred to as the former headmistress of "Sanatan Balika Vidyayatan". We are proud that our former headmistress has made her presence felt in the USA. But we are sad to note that the name of our school, of which she was headmistress for pretty long before her departure for the USA, has been wrongly stated as "Sanatan Balika Vidyayatan" instead of Satadal Balika Vidyayatan. Incidentally, Ms Dutta had sent her message of good wishes from New Jersey to our present headmistress Mrs Kanika Ghose on the occasion of the school's silver jubilee which was observed on 24, 25 and 26 January 1981.
Samir Chatterjee, Secretary, Sukchar Satadal Balika Vidyayatan, 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Whose law?

How Mustaqim was killed (19 April) highlighted the beastly attitude of some policemen like Hariram Pal. Outlaws are far more humane than policemen who take the law into their own hands and brutally murder prisoners.
Niranjan Parhi, Balasore, Orissa

Are the police the ultimate legal authority? If so, why are there so many courts and judges in our country? Now that the police have launched a massive hunt for Phoolan Devi, one can easily guess what will happen to her if she is caught. But killing one Baba Mustaqim or Phoolan Devi will not put an end to lawlessness in the ravines. Dacoity is a result of an economic failure—the failure to rescue people from poverty and suffering, the failure to prevent them from being exploited by the rich.
A. S. Guha, Cachar, Assam

Big mistake

The government of India should have formed a committee of eminent historians or consulted some living contemporaries of Gandhiji, to scrutinise the script of *Gandhi* (*Nearly 100 errors in Gandhi*, 19 April)before deciding to finance the grand venture.
J. Devaraj, Coimbatore

The idea of making a film on Bapu is commendable. But whether it shall be accepted by his millions of sons and daughters is doubtful. The sum and substance of the script you published is official ignorance.
Trilochan Sarangi, Orgaon

I believe that anyone who examines the script closely would find no less than 1,000 mistakes. But such minor mistakes will not lower Gandhiji's prestige. The younger generation wants to see Gandhiji on screen, not split hairs about dates.
I. J. Swamy, Visakhapatnam

Understanding China

Subramaniam Swamy's disclosures (*China and India: the two are even*, 26 April) are rather unrevealing, in view of the inadequate economic data available about China. It is true that China's performance in the light engineering sector has been poorer than ours. This was evident from the Chinese exhibits at the 1980 international trade fair; most of these were heavy engineering products. Furthermore, the motive behind underplaying American estimates is to invite large-scale foreign investment for China's ambitious modernisation programme. Much of the relevant information about China is collected clandestinely by trade agents of various countries for economic intelligence. But all of this data is questionable. The Chinese have hitherto kept a close surveillance on attempts by aliens to collect and transmit economic data. However, if the Chinese are honest this time, they will qualify to receive the maximum aid from the IMF and IDB. As a consequence, India's share of the aid will be cut.

Ranbir Singh, Rohtak

Ambition destroys

Death to the actress! (25 January) about the historic trial of Madame Jiang Qing, was excellent. We do not really know very much about the excesses committed in the name of social transformation during the cultural revolution in China. What we do know is that whoever is in power has the advantage of being able to manipulate the official media. At one time the cultural revolution claimed to be an "overwhelming success"; now it is called a "mistake of Mao." Similarly, when India's emergency was in force, people admired the discipline and order. When it ended, it was called a horrible experience. Madame Mao's only fault was that she was too ambitious. But whether she is a bully or a demon, our sympathies are with her. She is no common criminal, or else she would not have the courage to defy the court. In China, yesterday's victims are today's victors.
Sagarmoy Paul, Shillong

Reading the article, I visualised at least some of the sensational scenes at the proceedings of the special courts in India, two years ago.
T. Ramachandra Rao, Machilipatnam

Illustration/Ali Bhusan Malik

An idea

Will someone please explain the basic idea behind the international year of the disabled to Varanasi's policemen?
Ajit Bhaskaran, Kottayam

PM by merit?

In his interview (*"I have never been a chamcha, and never will"* 19 April) Dr Subramaniam Swamy says, "Morarji Desai, without being a *chamcha*, has risen from the position of a party worker to the position of Prime Minister." One would agree with Mr Swamy as far as Mr Desai's rise to the position of deputy prime minister is concerned. But the mantle of prime ministership fell on him only because he was nominated by JP.
Asok Mohan Chattopadhyay, Darjeeling

Wrong date

Anil Saari in *The revolution that is sweeping UP again* (5 April) says "Kranti has recreated the excitement of the 1957 Gaddar movement (the first war of independence against British rule)..." But the British had already left India on 15 August 1947.
D. L. Banik, Doomdooma, Assam

Sorry, our mistake. It should have read the 1857 Gaddar movement.

Rich and poor

Peasant leader extraordinary (4 January) was absorbing. But at one point, the peasant leader Mr C. Narayanaswami Naidu said, "There should not be any distinction between small and big farmers. Don't we pay the same price for the inputs? Don't we get the same price for our products? Don't we all face the same threats from natural calamities?" I disagree with Mr Naidu. The big farmers are in a much more advantageous position compared with that of the poor farmers. Just the fact that all farmers get the same price for their products is no reason why they should be treated equally.
M. Shobana Kumar, Bombay

Multiparty system

Thank you for the interview with Chandrajit Yadav, leader of the new party, Loktantrik Lok Dal (*"Madhu Limaye became an instrument for my ouster,"* 1 February). I am confident a day shall come when there will be thousands of political parties with two or three members in each. I marvel at our politicians' capacity to create new parties
S. Guha and R. Guha, Dhanbad

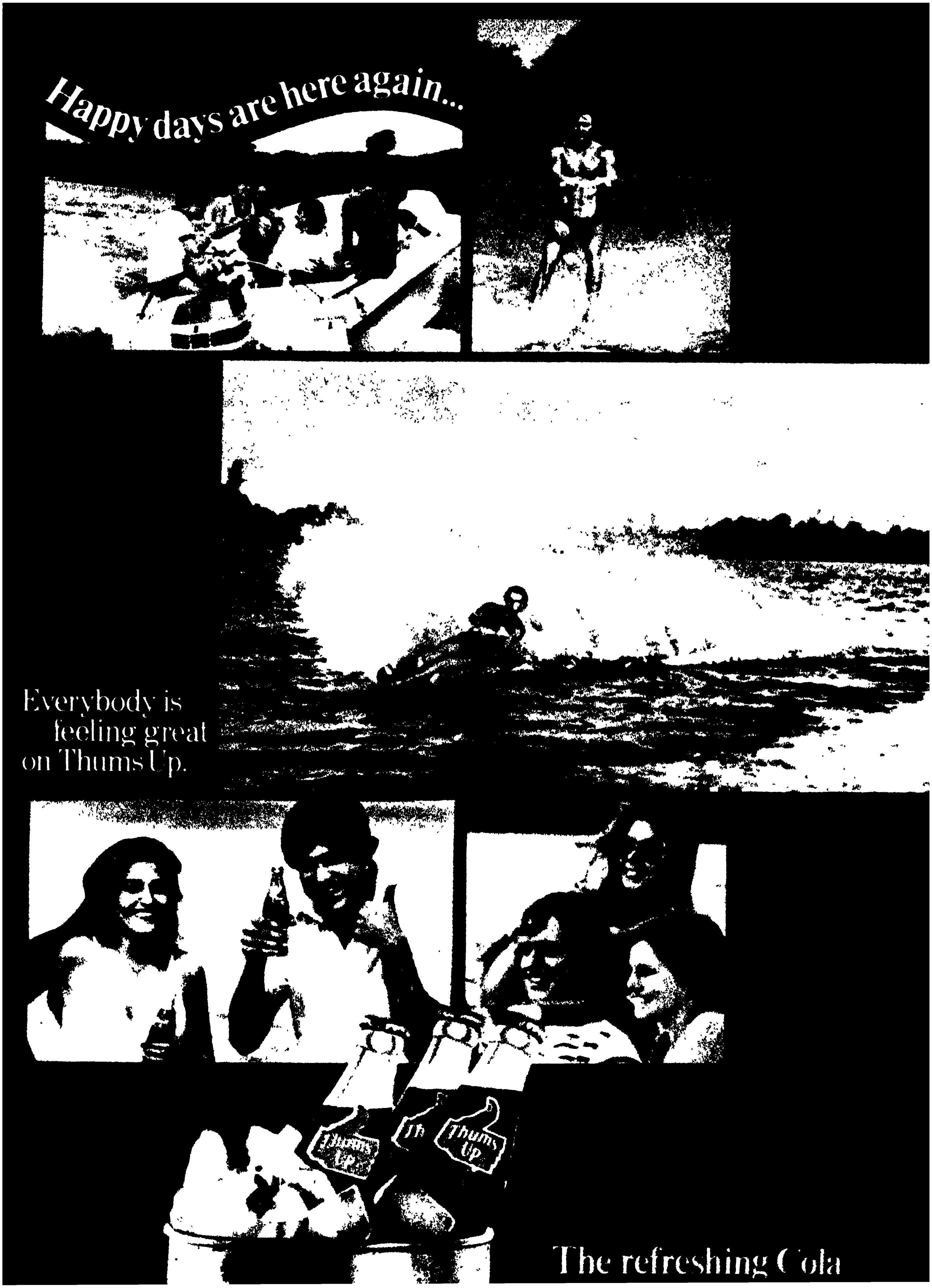
All clear

This refers to the item *Elections before defence? (The Government,* 25 January). The road to Rudraprayag is never snowbound as mentioned; it remains open throughout the year. Rudraprayag is only 2,000 feet above sea level, on the Kedarnath-Badrinath pilgrimage route.
M. L. Trikha, New Delhi

Last letter

I hope this is not *my* last letter!
M. H. Jowher, Srinagar

Rs 50 for the last letter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EXCLUSIVE
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EXCLUSIVE

BY KULDIP NAYAR

'India is facing Bharat'

I have always wondered what makes old Gandhians tick. They have gone on in their dogged way, for the last 30 years, to save their shrinking world from the onslaught of moneyculture and ridicule. A convention of this vanishing species (and a few others) in a Haryana hamlet, Pattikalyana, the other day gave me an opportunity to watch them at close quarters.

There they were, squatting on the floor, busy at their spinning wheels when they were not participating in the discussions. I had met some of them before. They seemed to have acquired more grey hair and lines on their faces since I saw them last. But their eyes shone as usual with courage and conviction. Their austere living and home-spun khadi dress underlined their determination to adhere to the line they had chalked out for themselves many years ago.

One by one, they narrated their experiences in the field, of people's lessening faith in democracy and deteriorating living conditions in the countryside. The story of petty officials, landlords and local politicians joining hands to corner most of the benefits and to sustain their stranglehold had a familiar ring. They noted that the plight of the landless and harijans had worsened. They saw no prospect of immediate relief and found the country "disintegrating" under the weight of caste and communalism.

They were not anti-government. But they spoke critically of how one government after another had strayed from Mahatma Gandhi's path and failed to ensure that no one would have to go without two square meals a day. But the solution some of them proposed seemed to ignore the fact that the world has moved far, in recent decades and more so since Gandhi's death, that people's lives and attitudes had changed. They wanted every village in the country to be converted into a self-sufficient unit. Decentralisation of power is understandable, but to make lakhs of villages self-sufficient units is an unrealistic proposition. I do not know if it is even good economics.

It was also suggested that abstinence was what they should preach to control the population. This slogan may have been all right two decades ago. But the new generation has a different idiom. It can be persuaded to plan the family and use scientific methods to control birth. Telling the young to be *brahmacharis* would only invite ridicule.

I suspect Gandhians are becoming as doctrinaire in their approach as the marxists. Perhaps even more, as the marxists, wherever in power, whether in the Soviet Union, China, West Bengal or Kerala, have been adapting their creed to suit changing conditions. Gandhi was full of contradictions—which perhaps was his way of ensuring that dogma did not get hold of the movement he led. The war against machine-made cloth did not stop him from blessing the sewing machine and Singer who brought it to every home. When he was told that a sewing machine was an anti-thesis of the spinning wheel, he did not try to solve the contradiction.

What worries me is the self-righteous tone which many Gandhians have acquired. I recall that once at a closed-door meeting on bhoodan in Bihar, the government was criticised for lack of performance. A woman bhoodan worker openly attacked Nehru, who was present, again and again for not being able to implement the programmes and to check corruption and nepotism. Nehru lost his temper and hit back by saying that he knew how bhoodan workers thrived on the money they received from "vested interests."

At the Haryana convention also there was no attempt at introspection or self-criticism. But some speakers claimed that they had done it at some of their inner meetings held earlier. This may well be true but the way Vinoba's name was mentioned with great esteem at the convention did not suggest that. One cannot forget that he was on the side of authoritarianism during the Emergency, and no Gandhian is true to Mahatma Gandhi's tenets if he tries to justify dictatorship in the name of discipline. Vinoba is a *sarkari sadhu*, and Gandhians should have had no compunction in saying so.

However, one observation aptly described the present situation when he said: "India is facing Bharat." The speaker elucidated it by saying that India stood for the elite, the bureaucracy, industrialists, politicians, landlords and the English-speaking people, whereas Bharat consisted of workers, cultivators, the landless, the poor and the Indian language-speaking population. The future, the speaker said, depended on whether India emerged victorious or Bharat. Brilliant analysis but to what end?

I admire the Gandhians' faith in the reconstruction of society through non-violent methods. I agree that if the individual is ignored and sacrificed for what is considered the good of society, that is no progress. But the way the practising politicians have disfigured the system makes me wonder whether political democracy could bring to bear the strength of numbers of the poor with such powerful pressures on the ruling classes that they would be compelled to move in the direction of economic democracy.

But then even the Naxalite leader, Mr Nagabhushan Patnaik, who says that "the parliamentary path is a negation of the new democratic revolution," seems to have discovered that "the politics of annihilation is not a pragmatic philosophy."

The Gandhians are right when they say that murder is murder, whether it is of a landlord or an industrialist. But how to persuade them to accept social responsibility is a question often raised but not answered. The Lok Sevak Sangh, a voluntary force that Mahatma Gandhi had proposed, is considered the best instrument to fight vested interests. There is, however, no coherent plan to raise such a force. JP's efforts to have people's committees also came to naught because some of the worst types of men and women came to be members of the committees.

The Gandhians appear content to be clean themselves, to wear home-spun khadi, to lead austere lives. But can individuals be saved if society becomes corrupt? How do we revolutionise a society which supports the status quo and attributes its sufferings to *karma* and not "the system?"

I was as much confused after attending the convention as before. But I found the Gandhians saying farewell prayers with the same vigour and faith as they had on the opening day. It must be faith that sustains them.

BIHARSHARIF: RSS spreads its poison again

There is nothing new or unusual about a squabble at a country liquor den. It happens every day in every part of the country. But what was it that converted a minor incident with communal overtones in the Muslim-dominated village of Gagandiwan into the terrible six-day conflagration that raged across Biharsharif? Who organised the rumour campaign that lit simultaneous fires in dozens of different places? TOOSHAR PANDIT took his camera, braved government frowns, curfew and hunger, and travelled into the interiors of this desolate district of Bihar to bring back the saddening truth. It is not only a story of RSS involvement (the name of a local RSS boss Rajkishore appears in story after story), but also of unimaginable callousness on the part of Bihar chief minister Jagannath Mishra who seemed to realise there were riots in his backyard only when Mrs Indira Gandhi learnt about them

Gagandiwan is a predominantly Muslim village on the southern outskirts of Biharsharif—a crowded, poor town which serves as the headquarters of the poor but violent Nalanda district of Bihar. Biharsharif (area: 912.3 sq kms; pop: 5,14,000) owes its name to the *mazar* (tomb) of the Muslim saint Maqdoom Baba (a contemporary of Feroze Shah Tughlaq), and over the centuries it has become a centre of Bihar's Muslim population. Around 45 per cent of Biharsharif town is Muslim, and 25 per cent of the district is Muslim (compared to the state average of 12 per cent). And these Muslims, like the Hindus, are "backwards": among the Muslims mainly *julahas* and among the Hindus *yadavs, kurmis* and *koiris*—Nalanda is, in fact, known as the "backwards" district.

Gagandiwan is one of the villages with a Muslim majority; there are only 15 Hindu families, as against more than 150 Muslim families. Such a concentration of Muslims (among whom alcohol is banned) did not mean that there was no toddy shop there; neither did it mean that only the Hindus enjoyed the pleasures of toddy. There were some Muslims among the patrons too. In fact, the toddy shop seemed to be one place which was "secular": it was run by a harijan, and the Hindus seemed to have no qualms about drinking from the hand of an untouchable, just as those Muslims who went there seemed to have no problems breaking the law of Allah.

On the afternoon of Thursday 30 April, around 3.30, Chotan Pasi, the harijan owner of the toddy shop, lowered a pot of toddy hung from the top of the palm tree to his two assistants standing below: this was fresh stock for the day's customers. But hardly had the pot of toddy reached the assistants when two Muslim hoodlums, Matin and Gama, turned up and demanded that the toddy be given to them. Chotan clambered down and told them that they could have the toddy—if they paid for it. But Matin and Gama simply snatched the pot and began to walk off. Hearing the altercation, two yadav youths arrived and forced Matin and Gama to give back the toddy. Now Matin and Gama were angry, and brought along a small crowd of their Muslim supporters; the yadavs too gathered; the battlelines were drawn. But the only violence at that stage was verbal; only abuse was exchanged.

Gagandiwan is only 15 minutes from the police station on the Patna-Ranchi highway, but the police took more than an hour to turn up. However, officer-in-charge R. N. Sharma of the Muradpur police station turned up with his men just in time to prevent a violent clash between the two groups. The crowds were dispersed, but a section of Muslims vented its anger by setting fire to a haystack, a hut, and burnt a buffalo to death. The police simply looked on, making no attempt to stop this arson. And the Hindus, for understandable reasons, panicked: the 15 families immediately left the village.

And thus began the rumours: that Muslims had "massacred" Hindus. And many Hindus were all too ready to believe the motivated liars who spread such stories, because Gagandiwan did have a record of communal tension. Indeed, even the government was aware of this tension: in fact, by a coincidence, just a day before the incident a magistrate, Mr R. N. Sinha, had been assigned to the police picket at the village. Strangely, when the trouble broke out the magistrate was nowhere to be found: according to his own admission when he heard the commotion and learnt that trouble was brewing, he simply ran away back to town!

The trouble between the Hindus and the Muslims was traditional in character: over a piece of land near a mosque and a common well known as *mughalkuan* (the well of the Mughals). The Muslims said this land was part of a mosque; the Hindus had planted a *tulsi* sapling and installed an idol. The bad blood became worse in 1979 over this dispute, and tempers finally subsided only after the death of a harijan. Then early this year, Hindus installed a *shivalingam* under a tamarind tree at the mouth of the village near the highway; the Muslims claimed that this land was part of their burial ground. Survey records showed that this particular plot belonged to a Hindu, but then it was contiguous to the burial ground, and had never been tilled, so the Muslims claimed that it could not be separated from the burial ground. Eventually the administration placed markers showing the extent of the burial grounds and posted a police picket there (if only more such markers are placed, many potential trouble spots will be cleansed of tension). It was such a history that fuelled dangerous fires. The history, plus an inept administration which, had it wanted to, could have nipped the Gangandiwan problem right there without any fuss. Plus, now dangerous elements who had been waiting for a chance to make Hindu fight Muslim in a place, where, despite the equal distribution of populations and the attendant tensions, no communal riots had taken place since those evil days of 1947.

The same night, the night of 30 April, two Muslims, Nur Hassan (40) and Nannu Mia (25) were stabbed to death in Biharsharif town, and two shops belonging to Muslims, within 30 yards of each other, were gutted. There had been no trouble in Biharsharif town that day, but communalism was literally being dragged into the town by some forces. The administration should have taken note: indeed, it did, but then it bungled it up. That night, deputy inspector general of police D. N. Sahay and divisional commisioner P. K. Mishra drove into Biharsharif from their Patna headquarters. The first thing they did was order indefinite curfew in town from 5 am Friday 1 May.

During the evening, wild rumours spread through the town: lurid accounts of mass massacres of Hindus, the Hindu dead were placed at least 200. What was fascinating was the detail and the similarity between the story being spread in different parts of the town and villages where Hindus were in majority. The rumourmongers were intelligent in addition to being vile. They knew the caste composition of the Hindu population there, and they gave a specific caste edge to the rumours. Stories were circulated that the CPI MP from the area, Vijay Kumar Yadav (who is a backward by caste, as his name shows) had been killed by Muslims. This was bound to inflame the yadavs. Similarly the koiris were instigated by stories of how Dr Avadesh, an important local

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leader of the koiris had been murdered; for the kurmis the "death" of Mr Ramanand Singh, a respected local headmaster was the bait. The telis were told that Dr Kamta Prasad had died. Because of the curfew nobody could check whether these were lies or not (they were). The rumours were beautifully organised, and excellently orchestrated.

The suspicion, for obvious reasons, fell on the RSS (later, very definite proof was to emerge about RSS involvement). Because of the large percentage of Muslims, the RSS has taken to building a strong base in Biharsharif, and it has done its best to encourage Hindu chauvinism. The authorities ordered a crackdown on known RSS activists.

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Alinagar: 1 May

ALINAGAR is at one extreme of Biharsharif; despite its name, only about 15 Muslim families used to live there, and they were very poor. For some inexplicable reason, Alinagar had been exempted from curfew: no one can give a convincing answer as to why this happened. Alinagar was also the place from where Rajkishore, a rich businessman with interests in Patna and Calcutta, ran the RSS organisation of the district; he was the *sanghachalak*.

The superintendent of police Niyaz Ahmed, set out for Alinagar with a force at around four in the early morning of Friday 1 May. Along the way to Alinagar he picked up 20 frontrank RSS activists from different points, but he failed to catch Rajkishore: this was to prove very costly later that day.

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Police guarding shiva *at Gagandewan*

It was a Friday, the day of weekly prayers for Muslims and the men of Alinagar's 15 Muslim families (they earned their living by either fixing horseshoes or rolling *biris)* went a little before noon to say their prayers, at Bari Dargah (built at the time of Shah Jehan). The men were apprehensive; there was trouble in the air and they of course knew it, like anyone else. On their way to the mosque, three of the men, Aziz, Hanif and Akhtar Hussain stopped by at the Bari Darga police outpost to tell the police about their fears. But the officer in charge, Shukla, shrugged them off.

Just as the *azaan*, the call to prayer, came over the mosque amplifier, smoke could be seen curling up from the direction of the Muslim huts in Alinagar. The prayers were interrupted, and many of the men left for their unguarded homes.

Jamila Khatun, 30, had just finished cooking her meal. A noise which was faint at first began growing in volume. She could also hear the sounds of bombs bursting at some distance. That drew her out of her house, as it did the others: she saw a mob of some two to three hundred people carrying swords, spears, knives and choppers almost at her doorstep; her neighbours were ruinning away. At the head of the procession was Rajkishore, the RSS boss of the area, holding a gun and flanked by his sidekicks Dashu Pamaria and Panna Shau. "Kill them...shoot them..don't let anybody escape," she heard Rajkishore telling his followers. The followers chanted a warcry as they encircled the Muslim settlement.

"Most of us ran to the house of Mohammed Mia which was a little away from the dirt track leading to the settlement," Jamila says. Meanwhile the mob had started setting houses on fire. Those they spared from arson, they wrecked Then the house of Mohammed Mia where some 30 Muslims (of them only four were adult males) had taken refuge was set on fire. the men pulled down the mud wall at the back and everyone sprinted to the house of Ulfat Mia, some ten yards away But the mob was close on their heels, and before they could recover their breath that house too was on fire. The hunted moved to the back of the house. The mob had by then splintered the front door. Soon they smashed the door of the room where the Muslims were huddled. "We moved to another room," Jamila recalls But that hardly offered any security. Rajkishore stood at the mouth of the bigger room and ordered some of his men to this ante-room.

In ones and twos they started dragging out the frightened and helpless people, and began hacking them. The main weapons of slaughter were the brutal *kakat*, a sharp-edged chopper used in villages for husking, and swords. Screaming babies and children were snatched away from their mothers and hacked to death. And all the while, Rajkishore stood there shouting encouragement.

There was little to loot from the poor people, but that little was not spared Just then, around three,six policemen arrived. And providence, thus, in a small gesture of mercy, left some people alive to tell the world this gruesome story. When the mob left, they had accounted for nine deaths—six women and three children—and injuries to some half a dozen people, two of whom, Md Rizwan, a four-year old boy and Ishrat Begum, an 18-year-old married woman, later died in hospital

Ishrat Begum did not know that she would be back in hospital so soon. She had been there only six days ago to deliver her child—a son. She lost her son to the butchers. As she lay gasping in the hospital a magistrate came to record her evidence. In her dying declaration she repeated what at least nine other survivors had told the police She too pointed her accusing finger at Rajkishore—the RSS boss. The only one to defend Rajkishore is a government employee called Nazir Mia, 50, who works at the silk weaving centre at Alinagar. He says Rajkishore saved his life. This is quite logical; Nazir Mia is comparatively better off in that poverty stricken community, with a regular job, and therefore influential. But even Nazir Mia incriminates Rajkishore in a way. Today this RSS boss's trying to save his and his organisation's skin by saying he was never in Biharsharif during the riots but in Calcutta! Who knows if this lie will save him from punishment.

But even in that sadness there were stories that restored one's faith in the country and the people—stories of sacrifice and courage and the secularism which the RSS wants to destroy. The family of Gani Mia lives, though their house was among the first to be set on fire. Seeing the crowd approaching, some 15 members of the family ran to the residence of Jati Singh just across the road. Jati Singh, who has been out of a job for some time, willingly offered shelter to the Muslims. The crowd surrounded his house and demanded that he surrender the Muslims; he refused. He was abused and his house was damaged by a hail of stones. "But for him we would have been dead now," says Gani Mia's wife. Curiously, Jati Singh was arrested by police the next day and his 60-year-old mother Rajkumari, wife Sarda Devi, widowed sister-in-law Putul Devi and her two kids Anil (6) and Sumita (8) were left starving. That night two Hindus were killed in the town.

Some Alinagar survivors

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Some Gulni survivors

Gulni: 3 May

Things were comparatively calm on the next day, Saturday 2 May. After the BSF, the CRP and the Bihar Military Police—some 500 strong—rolled into Biharsharif it seemed that the worst was over. The chief secretary of the state, Prem Prakash Nayyar, even ventured to say, "We think the situation is settling down" But that was optimism. On that very night four Muslims were killed at Chorsua, a village under Giriak police station, and all the 30 mud huts in which Muslims lived were destroyed. The casualties would have been higher had not most of the Muslims earlier during the day migrated to a neighbouring village, Bakra, where the two communities were more evenly matched populationwise. Four refused. They paid the price for their obstinacy by their lives. And the next day the communal fury reached its zenith

It flared up quite early in the morning at Gulni, a village north of Biharsharif. It was again a village where the Muslims were in minority The total population of the village was around 500 of which the Muslims (these were not *julahas*, but pathans) accounted for around 100 They were comparatively affluent, being landowners; plus many of the men worked elsewhere and sent part of their salaries back to the village In fact, that was why when an armed Hindu mob, some 1000 strong, flowed in from neighbouring villages, led by RSS boss Rajkishore (who was evading arrest and still is), according to the testimonies of two victims, Salauddin Khan and Ghulam Khan, at the crack of dawn there were only eight ablebodied males among 70 odd Muslim residents of the village. But it was one place where the Muslims resisted. Soon after the invading mob had set a haystack and a house on fire, all the Muslims gathered at Tunnu Mia's house, which was both spacious and more solid. The crowd started pelting stones on the tiled roof. Under an incessant shower of stones and bricks the roof caved in at several

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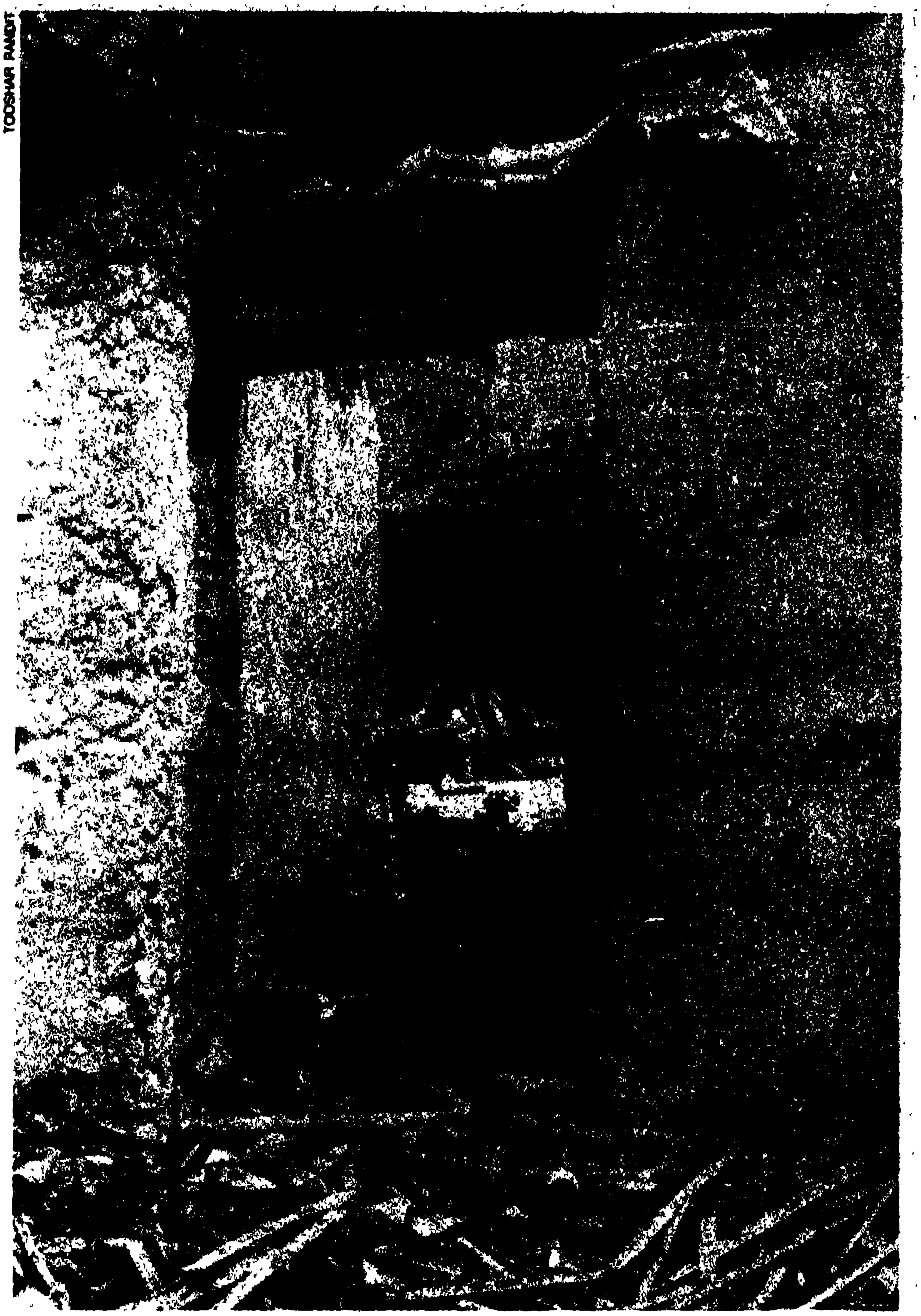
Some Muslim survivors praying at a relief camp places. A part of the wall and the front door were wrecked. Desperate now, the Muslims hit back with stones thrown at them. The two sides traded missiles for about 10 hours, till about 3 pm, when the house was finally set on fire. The Muslims now scurried for safety to the mosque some 200 yards away; they managed to escape because the mob was concentrated in the front and had left the rear unguarded.

But there was to be no peace here either. The mob now attacked the mosque, using bricks stacked nearby for the construction of a government school. They also started throwing dried leaves into the mosque. "It was a fierce battle," says Salauddin, an employee in the municipality, who now carries the battle scars in the shape of bruised lips and a fractured arm. This went on till seven in the evening. Then the mob started throwing fireballs—lighted clothballs soaked in kerosene—into the mosque. At once it became clear why they had been showering dried leaves earlier. The Muslims, trapped inside, had hardly any option: if they did not get out they would be burnt. The mob had also now breached the walls. Opening both the doors at the entrance of the mosque all eight male members charged into the crowd screaming at the top of the their voices and expertly swinging their lathis (they were indeed experts). Surprised, the crowd retreated a few yards: finally, an opening was forced. But in the process three were killed, and another, Alimuddin Khan, was seriously injured, his knee was smashed. As he fell to the ground, his 60-year-old widowed aunt was killed. When the bodies were later retrieved, they were charred beyond recognition. At around 7.30 pm some among the mob raised an alarm saying that the police were coming, and soon the mob melted away (the police actually came on the following morning).

The Muslims finally escaped, and reached a palm grove further south where they were met by a Hindu resident of the village, Ram Sahay Mahato, who, with a few others, escorted the Muslims to the safety of a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Gulni: a wrecked house

Casualties in communal disturbances

Year	No. of incidents	KILLED					INJURED				
		Hindus	Muslims	Others	Police	Total	Hindus	Muslims	Others	Police	Total
1968	346	24	99	10	—	133	455	451	403	240	1549
1969	519	66	558	49	1	674	796	1000	806	275	2977
1970	521	68	176	54	—	298	656	731	220	116	1723
1971	321	38	65	—	—	103	603	606	54	67	1330
1972	240	21	45	3	1	70	541	407	108	151	1207
1973	242	26	45	1	—	72	643	456	169	232	1550
1974	248	26	61	—	—	87	566	435	122	143	1266
1975	205	11	22	—	—	33	444	277	169	72	962
1976	169	20	19	—	—	39	391	330	40	33	794
1977	188	12	24	—	—	36	563	385	63	111	1122
1978	219	51	56	1	—	108	752	711	212	126	1801

Source. National Police Academy, Hyderabad neighbouring village, Sakhrol, across the river Goithaoa, where the Muslims were in significant concentration.

At noon another place, Harnaut—a small country town on the Patna-Ranchi highway and some 25 kilometres north of Biharsharif—was in flames. There in the busy bazaar area a Muslim shop was burnt and three others were ransacked. One of the shops belonged to Razzak Mia. He lived in the shop itself with his relatives—niece Khairunnissa (40), and her two sons Kaushar (6) and Anwar (5). The family, along with a guest Dulaki Mia (60) staying with them, was wiped out. Another shopkeeper, Bahadur Mia (70) who was seriously hurt later succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. The mob after killing these people, headed for the mosque at another end of the town. Not very long after Sumitra Devi, 32, a teacher in local girls school returned to her home near the mosque, the mob with choppers and swords started to pour in and proceeded for the nearby huts where three families of fruitsellers lived. The huts were empty as their occupants had already fled. When Sumitra Devi saw some people in the crowd sprinkling kerosene on those huts she raised an alarm. "If you set them on fire, my place too will be burnt," she screamed. That prevented the houses from being set on fire but she was roundly abused for taking the side of the Muslims. For next 20 minutes the crowd was on the rampage, wrecking the huts and damaging the mosque. "I do not know what came over them," Sumitra Devi says. To her the mob mostly consisted of outsiders. The real tragedy, however, was that all this happened inspite of an impressive police presence.

Rupaspur: 3 May

At around four on the same Saturday, a storm broke out over Rupaspur, a village seven kilometres from Belchi (where harijans were burnt in 1978). Only six Muslim families lived here, about 30 people. At the sight of an approaching mob, the Muslims rushed to the houses of local Hindu landlords for whom they worked. Nuresha Khatun, with five other members of her family, went to the house of Mangal Kahar. (Her husband Suleman, who was not at home then, landed up at the house of Ramkali Singh with another group.) The remaining members of her family took shelter in the house of Naginder Singh with a third group, and a fourth found refuge in the residence of Sivshankar Sonar. The mob, composed of people from the neighbouring villages, burnt the Muslim huts and then split up to attack the various houses where the Muslims had taken shelter. They wanted the Muslims, and threatened to break into the houses of the protectors' to get their quarry. Mangal Kahar tried his best, but was helpless against a mob gone berserk They forced their way into his house Nuresha had a baby on her lap when a chopper fell on her head, making her unconscious, the baby was killed. So was her eldest daughter, father-in-law, and the brother-in law hacked to death. Her sister in-law too was hit, and was given up for dead among the corpses, she died later in hospital. Nuresha survived

It was easier for the mob at Naginder Singh's house: Naginder Singh's nephew, Arvind, simply opened the gates to the crowd Four more deaths Ramkali Singh and Sivshankar Sonar, however, did themselves and society proud. When the mob threatened to invade their houses both Ramkali and Sivshankar warned that they would personally resist if any such thing happened And they succeeded in

The toll

Biharsharif town	6
Alinagar	11
Chorsua	4
Gulni	4
Harnaut	6
Rupaspur	15
Jamalichak	1
Rohui	5
Total	52

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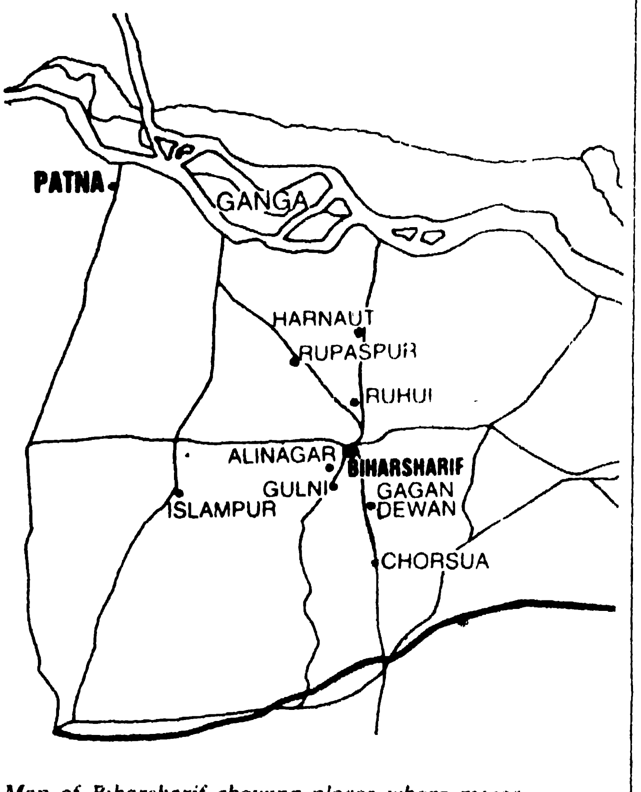


Map of Biharsharif showing places where major incidents took place

The tally:

Dead	52
Muslims	50
Hindus	2
Injured	77
Relief Camps	11
Muslim Refugees	12,733
Hindu Refugees	1,650
Arrests	747

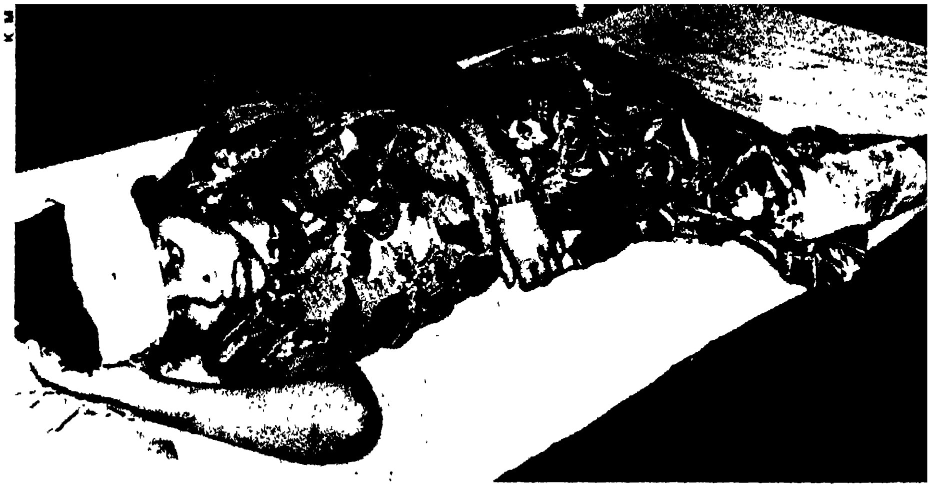
turning away the murderous rioters. That is why Suleman, Nuresha's husband, lives. While retreating the mob killed four more in the next village, Ramzanpur The final tally for Rupaspur and Ramzanpur: 15 dead. And this despite the fact that on the previous evening the Congress(I) president for the district, Dr Ishar Ahmed, had pleaded with the authorities that the BSF be posted in that area. That night another Muslim was killed in Jamalichak

On Monday 4 May Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi came to Biharsharif Among the things that must have made her come was a frontpage report in the *Times of India* sent by its Patna correspondent Janak Singh, which for the first time hinted what was happening in Biharsharif. But the information that the PM had received from the Bihar government did not suggest that things were that bad; the Bihar government, desperate to hide its failure behind lies, had been insisting that the situation was well under control and all this was no more than skirmishing between two communities Mrs Gandhi made her own enquiries, and the IB reports confirmed her worst suspicions She had been misinformed by the government of Jagannath Mishra. She was even more worried because on 5 May she would be leaving for a foreign tour that included Arab countries The situation was certainly very embarrassing, to say the least She summoned her cabinet colleague from Bihar, Kedar Pande, and after some discussions, decided that she should see things for herself

That very morning, of 4 May, Bihar chief minister Jagannath Mishra had left Patna for New Delhi to attend a meeting of the central parliamentary board against the better counsel of his partymen from Nalanda district who urged him to postpone the visit and, instead, make a trip to Biharsharif. But the chief minister, displaying remarkable callousness, replied that he had asked some of his ministers to visit the place and there was hardly any need for him to cancel his trip to New Delhi.

But hardly had he reached the capital's Palam airport when he was summoned by Mrs Gandhi and asked to fly back with her And, one of the first questions that Mrs Gandhi asked Mr Mishra on reaching Biharsharif was: "Have you visited this place earlier?" Of course, he had not, and 45 people were already dead according to just the official count.

K M



Nuresha Khatun, injured at Rupaspur, in hospital

BSF patrolling deserted Harnaut bazar

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But even before the PM's convoy had reached Patna airport on its way back to Delhi hell had broken loose over Biharsharif town, with country-made bombs bursting all over the place. Reason: a totally false rumour that Muslims had poisoned the tank from where the town's water supply came. Such is the psychology of fear that many residents swore that they fell ill by drinking water; some as an antidote began taking alum with water and that made them even more sick. The operators in the local telephone exchange started telling people who called them that poison had indeed been traced. When the vice-chairman of the local municipality Ved Prakash rang up the exchange, he too got such a reply. The administration did not know what to do. When the CPI MP Vijay Kumar Yadav rang up the control room to find the truth he was told that water samples had been sent for a test, and till the report came the authorities could neither confirm nor deny the rumours. Late at night, when the bursting of bombs had become deafening, the police fanned out and fired 34 rounds at several places. Whether anybody was hurt or not is still not known since the authorities have not said what was the result of the firings.

Blind administration

Mrs Gandhi's visit brought some improvement in the administration. A hunt for unauthorised weapons was ordered. More BSF personnel

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R K KISHAN

Sumitra Devi:
'I don't know what came over them.'

R K KISHAN

Gani Mia's wife:
'But for him we would have been dead.'

R K KISHAN

Salauddin:
'It was a fierce battle.'

were flown in. But just when it seemed that things had subsided came reports from two villages under Ruhui police station (among the accused for the Belchi outrage many were from this area) that five more Muslims had been killed. That was on 5 May, and these incidents took place even after the administration had been warned on 4 May morning by local CPI leaders about the possibility of a communal flare-up. On 5 May at 10 am a note was sent from the CPI office to the divisional commissioner and the DIG repeating the warning. Two hours later the warnings became reality. And the place was hardly half an hour's drive from the town.

Thus, in six days between 30 April and 5 May, Biharsharif, once the seat of Buddhist culture, of non-violence, entered the dictionary of shame. There is abundant evidence of the systematic and selective nature of violence. The deaths reflect the pattern. 50 of 52 officially dead were Muslims. Most of the violence took place in areas where the Muslims were in a minority. What emerges is not simply a chronicle of violence committed by one community against another but a shattering picture of ineptness and often panic by the administration.

It should have known that communal relations in Biharsharif was far from cordial. Communal clashes during religious festivals had virtually become a regular feature. This, in turn, had led to the strengthening of those two communal organisations, the RSS and Jamat-e-Islami. Worse, almost every house in Nalanda district where food is eaten twice a day can boast of possessing a gun. Biharsharif tops the list in the seizure of illegal arms every year. The number of licenced guns in the district too is among the highest in the state. There were number of reasons for the government to keep an watchful eye on the place. Yet when the violence broke out the administration was caught napping. The resources were scant and the senior officers were missing: on the first day of violence four of the police vehicles were out of order, the district magistrate was on leave, the SDO had gone to Rajgir, and the SP was away!

Even after the terror had come the administration refused to acknowledge it. For the first three days it hardly did anything to contain the violence. The excuse: limited resources. But what prevented the chief minister from bringing in reinforcements? Why was not help taken from the army? They did an excellent job in Tripura and even a Marxist government did not hesitate to call them to its aid in the wake of the Mandai massacre last year. Such is the efficiency of his government that chief minister Dr Jagannath Mishra first came to know about the 30 April eruptions in Biharsharif only on 1 May, through a news agency message carried to him at Valmikinagar on the Indo-Nepal border by one of his colleagues. The chief minister promptly returned to Patna. One presumes he would have gone straight to Biharsharif. But instead, he went to Siwan to lay the foundation of a hospital! Obviously an indifferent chief minister thought Biharsharif could wait. Returning from Siwan on 3 May, (the day 25 people were killed in Biharsharif) Dr Mishra went to Sandesh in Bhojpur district. Biharsharif could still wait. It finally received his attention only when Mrs Gandhi began asking questions.

Jagannath Mishra: callous ruler

R K KISHAN

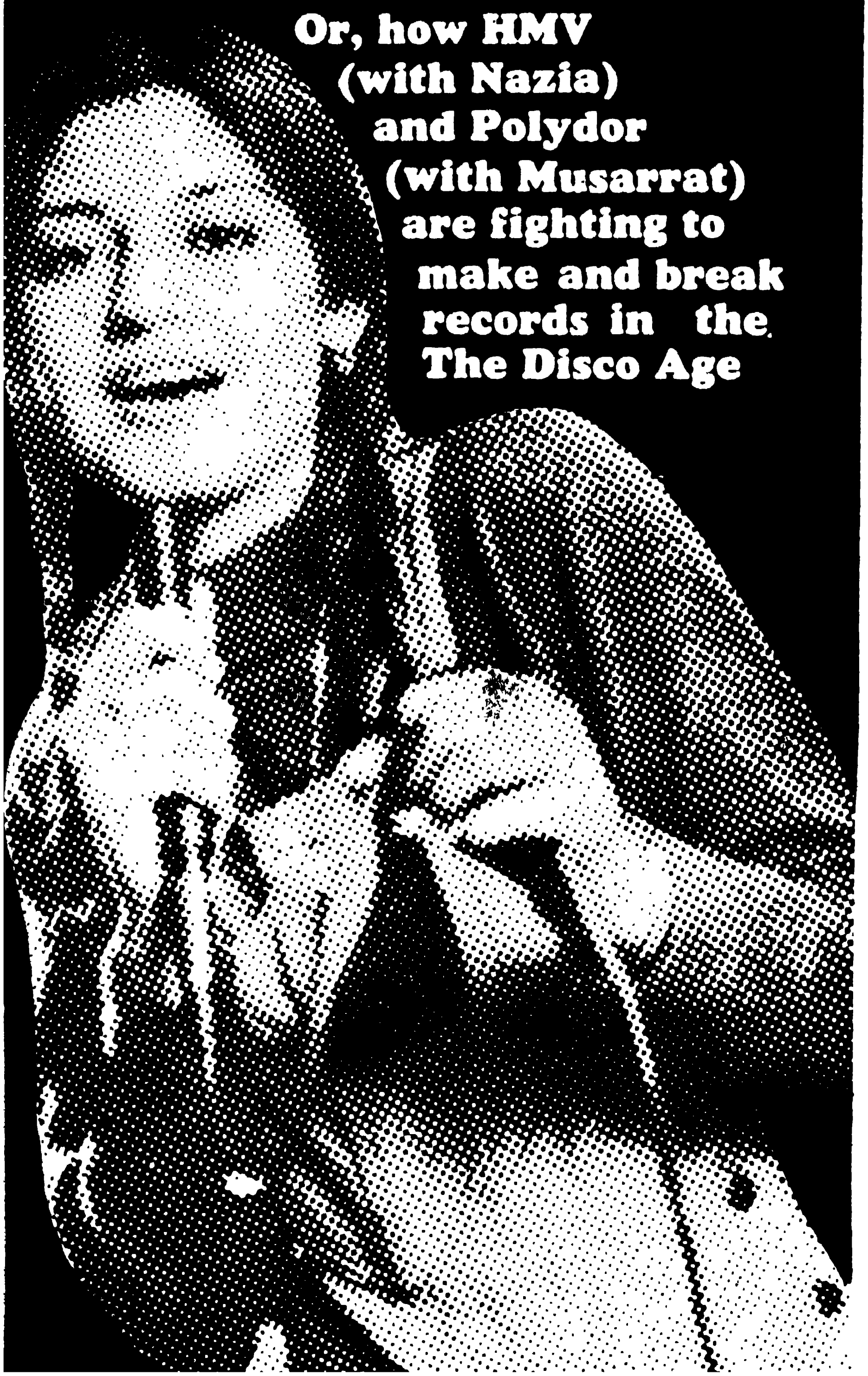
The administration by its casual handling not only allowed the communal flames to spread but some of its members actually fuelled these flames by actively aiding or abetting the communalists at several places. Surprisingly, the strongest indictment on this count came from the union home minister Zail Singh when he told the Rajya Sabha that some senior officials of the Bihar government could be behind the riots and suggested a judicial probe into the happenings in Biharsharif. Only after this did the Bihar government suspend ten officers including the officers-in-charge of Harnaut and Giriak police stations. And only after the tragedy was over did the government make some attempt to put its house in order.

Still worse, however, was the administration's attempt to cover up its lapses by imposing a kind of undeclared censorship on the press. *Times of India* correspondent Janak Singh was told by the chief minister that if he did not mend his ways he might get into serious trouble. The state government, as if to show it meant business, even held up copies of *Times of India* for several hours at the Patna airport on 6 May. The chief secretary was even more blunt. He told several reporters that if necessary the government would not even hesitate to use the National Security Act against them. And what did the government want? "We want only officially confirmed news and no views in newspapers." That was what Dr Mishra who seems to have forgotten the law, told the press at Patna airport on 8 May. One can understand why he wants only "officially confirmed news." So [illegible] it truth cannot be told. ■

SPECIAL REPORT

THE SOUND OF PROFITS

Or, how HMV (with Nazia) and Polydor (with Musarrat) are fighting to make and break records in the The Disco Age



The idea

"All action stations alert. Milestone one mission. Zero hour is approaching. the success of the mission depends on all of you." This was a memo circulated by Mr Anil Sud, managing director of HMV, to all sales personnel of the company on 25 March. Milestone one mission was HMV's record-breaking Hindi disco music album, *Disco Deewane*, the songs of which are sung by the *Aap jaisa koi* girl Nazia Hassan and the music composed by *Aap jaisa koi* composer Biddu. Zero hour was 3 April, the day the record was simultaneously released in India, Pakistan and the UK. But Mr Sud had little reason to be worried about the success of the album· on 3 April *Disco Deewane* created history in Indian music by selling 100,000 copies and becoming a gold disc on the day it was launched. But the record did not stop there Within a month of its being released, the album made it to the platinum disc mark—selling more than two lakh copies. A remarkable achievement, as the album did not have the backing of a film.

It all began in June last year, when, after the success of *Aap jaisa koi*, a song from the film *Qurbani* sung by Nazia Hassan and composed by Biddu (and marketed, incidentally, by HMV's great competitor Polydor) Mr Sud got the idea of bringing out a disco music album featuring the Nazia—Biddu combination. But two initial factors had to be considered first. whether there was a market for Hindi disco music and second, whether a Hindi music album of this nature could be a success without the backing of a film, especially as it would involve a major marketing exercise The first point had been debated before. since the early Seventies, when the song *Dum maro dum* from the film *Hare Krishna, Hare Ram* had become a runaway success. People in the industry believe that it was just on the basis of this song that the album had become a gold disc. But no one gave it much thought, especially as Western disco music in India had achieved only limited success, till *Karz* was released in 1980. Once again, it was just one disco number from the film, *Om shanti om* which was responsible for making the album a gold disc. Then came *Om hari om* from the film *Pyara Dushman* which again made the sales of the album go up. But no one was sure whether it was just one song which was responsible for making the sales of the album go up or the general

This story has been written on the basis of reports from SAUMITRA BANERJEE in Calcutta, ANIL SAARI in Delhi, LOUISE FERNANDES in Bangalore and B. SHANKAR in Bombay.

composition of all the numbers—until *Qurbani* was released and the song *Aap jaisa koi* became a fantastic success. People at HMV were convinced that it was this one song that was responsible for making the album reach record sales. It became a platinum disc in seven and half months and set a record (till *Disco Deewane* broke it). Not only this, they also observed that after the release of the film, the sales of the album went down. This convinced them that an album, even without the support of a film, could become a success.

In July Mr Sud called a meeting of the top executives of the company, told them of the idea and asked them for their opinion. He met with very good response. But a risk was being taken and. as Mr Sud, said: "The idea of *Disco Deewane* was a result of many chatting sessions and a conviction was born of this. And for me it had been a very gut feeling. But a risk was being taken alright. Till *Disco Deewane* it was believed that the media was more important than the music, but *Disco Deewane* changed this idea." At this meeting two things were decided· that Nazia Hassan would lend her voice to the music, her voice was considered to be fresh in an otherwise jaded music scene and that the music would be composed by Biddu, who it was believed was largely responsible for the success of *Aap jaisa koi.*

Biddu and Nazia

Biddu, however, has had no formal training in music. Born in 1948 in Bangalore, Biddu from his early childhood was discouraged by his parents from spending too much time on his only interest—music. "Biddu's father did not approve of Western music and we had broken two or three of his guitars to discourage him," Mrs Appaiah, Biddu's mother, told SUNDAY. But Biddu would not be discouraged. At the age of 13, as a student of St John's School in Bangalore, Biddu won his first music prize at a club contest—a box of chocolates. Besides, every Christmas he used to earn money singing carols. But as he grew older Biddu started spending more and more time on music and finally in his second year at St Joseph's College in Bangalore, he dropped out and formed a group called The Trojans. The group performed regularly at 'Three aces,' a local night club. But Biddu, as he had decided to make music a profession, found the openings in Bangalore far too limited and shortly after his father's death in 1963, ran away from home and headed for Calcutta. In Calcutta, he performed as a lead guitarist with a group and played regularly at the Trincas. "I was extremely worried about Biddu," said Mrs Appaiah. "He had no academic qualifications and musicians of his kind hardly receive enough encouragement to make a living on."

From Calcutta the group moved to Bombay, where they played at the Ambassador hotel. The group, however, broke up and Biddu decided to look for a fresher pasture—London. A fake travel agent promised him a ticket to London, took Rs 7,000 from him and disappeared. But Biddu, undeterred and with Rs 60 in his pockets, boarded a pilgrim boat to Mecca in 1968 and went to Beirut. There he sang for a month at a night club called La Grenouille and saved enough money to get him an air ticket to London. In London he began by working in a doughnut shop and playing in his spare time. Today, Biddu has come a long way from his humble beginnings—he has his own record company, has contracted artistes like Carl Douglas and Tina Charles and has sold 27 million copies of his records in the West.

Nazia Hassan, on the other hand, has been a brilliant student, has consistently topped in class and is interested in economics and business management. But from her early age she has had an interest in music. As she said in a BBC interview, "Home has always been full of music and art. My grandfather was a kind of landlord and an important man. He encouraged music and poetry at home. My brother and I used to have mushairas at home...and there used to be many musical stars coming over...With that background we just picked up music." Her first public appearance was over Karachi TV at the age of three.

Musarrat

Nazia

The HMV–Polydor rivalry

Once the choice of the singer and the composer had been finalised, HMV began establishing contacts with Biddu and Nazia through Mr Vinoth Kumar in the London office in October last year. But as the entire project had to be kept a secret, a code name for the project was established: The NH (Nazia Hassan) factor. Biddu readily agreed to the idea and signed the contract but HMV had some initial problems signing on Nazia Hassan. Mr Bashir Hassan, Nazia's father, felt that Nazia had received adverse publicity after the success of *Aap jaisa koi* (the press had reported a romantic link-up between Nazia and Feroze Khan) and was reluctant to allow his daughter to sign the contract. HMV, however, contacted Mr S. N. Bukhari, the EMI representative in Karachi (EMI is an associate concern of the HMV), who is a close friend of Mr Hassan and it was only after he had spoken to Mr Hassan that Nazia was given the permission to go ahead. Mr Hassan had another condition: the album should be released simultaneously in India and Pakistan or, at any rate, the album should not be released in India before it was released in Pakistan. HMV agreed and on 12 December the contract was signed.

Biddu

For HMV this was a major victory over competitor Polydor which was also vying for a similar tie-up with the two artistes. But Polydor could not get Biddu to agree to the idea. According to HMV, Biddu was unhappy at the way he had been played down by Polydor in the *Qurbani* album and far more prominence given to Kalyanji-Anandji. Besides, even while signing on Nazia, HMV had an advantage: it could get the album released simultaneously in India and Pakistan while Polydor could not as it had no arrangements for releasing the record in Pakistan.

For Polydor this was a defeat which it found difficult to reconcile to after all, Polydor had launched Nazia into the music scene, and that too in a big way. Polydor's reaction, therefore, was to compete with *Disco Deewane*. First, it released an English version of the *Qurbani* album sung by Sharon Prabhakar. Next, in the beginning of January, Polydor decided to bring out another album along the lines of *Disco Deewane*, called *M3*. Its agents contacted well-known arranger Peter Moss in London, who sewed up a deal with Boney M: the rights to the instrumental backing tracks of some popular Boney M numbers (like *Daddy Cool)* were bought by Polydor and Peter Moss played the cover music. Next, Mahendra Kapoor (who is on an exclusive contract to Polydor) then on a tour to London was roped in for the male voice. For the female voice, Musarrat Nazir, a Pakistani ghazal singer and actress, now settled in Canada was brought in. Musarrat has also cut a disc, *Horizons*, produced by a company owned by her husband, Dr Arshad Majid. The disc was recorded in four days flat at the Ivan Berg Studio in London, and after a week-long publicity campaign, was released on 3 April.

But Polydor denies that it had tried to contract Nazia and Biddu. According to Vijay Lazarus of Polydor, "We would have got Nazia if we wanted to. But we discussed it and realised that Nazia's voice was no great shakes. Even in *Disco Deewane* you can make out that her voice cracked in some of the tracks. So, we have not lost any race to sign up Nazia and Biddu—the race was never there. After the success of *Qurbani*, Nazia's father approached us with the idea of a disco record, but his terms were too rigid for us to accept. He asked us if he could approach EMI and we said we didn't mind."

Selling the album

Having got the contract, HMV asked Biddu to record some tracks and send them over to Calcutta for approval. In January, the 'rough cut' of eight numbers composed by Biddu were sent over and an audition was held which was attended by all senior executives. "It was a tremendous success and the response was overwhelming," said Mr Pratik Basu, deputy national sales manager of HMV. "As soon as we heard this we all knew that we had a super product in hand." The rough cut, too, held a surprise for HMV—two of the songs had been sung by Zoheb, Nazia's brother. After the audition a sales estimate was drawn up and the earlier estimate of 35,000 cassettes and LPs, which had been made without having listened to the songs, was increased to 50,000. The date of release was fixed at 1 March and a project note was prepared on the subject. Also, a list of comments were drawn up and Biddu asked to remix two tracks—*Komal* and *Dhundhli raat*—and record two extra tracks.

Next came the task of designing the jacket and deciding on a name for the album. The first name that was decided on was *Nazia jaisa koi*, the intention being to use the success of *Aap jaisa koi* to the advantage of the new album. Biddu, however, suggested the name *Disco Deewane* and took special care to compose the number. HMV, Calcutta, agreed with Biddu and changed the name. Then came the problem of designing the cover. Hundreds of photographs of Nazia, Biddu and Nazia along with Zoheb were shot in London and rushed down to Calcutta. Once again a meeting was called and the jacket transparency discussed. Finally, one with Nazia in jeans standing in Piccadally Circus was selected, and the art work prepared. But at the last moment the transparency for the jacket was changed to Nazia in dungerees recording at the studio. The reason: the transparency did not agree with the image HMV wanted to project. "The image of Nazia that we wanted to project was one of the girl-next-door. That was hardly being achieved with Piccadally Circus and Soho in the background," explained Mr Sud.

Besides the appeal of the music, one reason for the phenomenal success of *Disco Deewane* was the massive advertising and marketing campaign involved. The album was given exposure in two phases. In the first phase of the album's pre-release marketing, an audio-visual presentation travelled across the sub-continent, starting from Madras, which was shown to HMV dealers. The story of the audio-visual was built around "a day in the life of Nazia": Nazia at home, in school with her parents and friends, at a disco, in a recording studio and at a live performance. Slides with a commentary followed the audio-visual presentation to emphasise her association with Biddu and HMV. In addition, copies of a single stereo special featuring the songs *Disco Deewane* and *Aao na* were distributed to dealers as a free demonstration copy. In phase two of the marketing drive, the single was sold at a throwaway price of Rs 6 (instead of the normal price of Rs 13) to discos, cinema halls, clubs, hotels and restaurants so that people could get familiar with the numbers being played. Again, a week before the record was released, a teaser campaign was started which asked: "Is Nazia going to record again and for whom?" and "What's Nazia Hassan, the girl who sang *Aap jaisa koi* been upto in London, lately?" The idea was to generate interest among the public and ensure that the *Aap jaisa koi* girl was not forgotten. HMV spent Rs 5.75 lakhs on advertisements—the most they have spent on any album.

In the meantime, the date of release of the record changed from 1 March to 3 April, one reason being to coincide with Nazia's 16th birthday. But there was a more important reason. Shortly after the songs had been recorded at EMI's Abbey Road Studio in London, Mr Sud travelled to various dealers all over the country and discovered that with every successive day the demand for the record increased. Some more time was required, he decided, to meet the demand on the day of release. Accordingly the date was shifted. On 1 March, the master tape arrived in Calcutta and Mr Sud issued an office memo, advertising the record as the "Scoop of the year." By the middle of March, Mr Sud was sure that *Disco Deewane* would become a gold disc on the day of release.

The success

And it did. In the process it destroyed many myths about the Indian music market. In comparison to *Disco Deewane*, the next closest statistics are those of popular film scores. *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* made a gold in about five days, while more recently, *Kranti* reached the gold mark in 17 days. But *Disco Deewane's* success has not been limited to India. In Pakistan, Nazia's homeland, sales have crossed the 40,000 mark and in the UK, *Disco Deewane* has sold over 8,000 copies in LPs and cassettes. But its sales are expected to rise above 20,000 copies, putting it in the big league where the best sales in Indian music (such as the *Kabhi Kabhi* album) reach up to 35,000 copies.

What made *Disco Deewane* such a success? "It is the refreshingly new voice and the simplicity of the words *(Aao na pyar kare, hum aur tum naach kare)* which had the appeal. Besides, it is our marketing. For the first time we channelised men and resources to achieve this success. We have brought unknown people into the prominence. It is a marketing feat," said Mr Sud. But *Disco Deewane* is not the last we will hear of the Nazia-Biddu pair. As the man who conceived the *Disco Deewane* idea said, "The easiest temptation is to bring out another Biddu-Nazia record. But these things are trendy and trends might change. But certainly follow-up albums will come, though maybe not in the near future." ■

"Indian music is vital to my compositions"

ASHIS RAY spoke to Biddu in London

Biddu's house is in fashionable Kensington and the interviewee himself answers the door. Biddu is tall, long-haired and husky. But he is clean shaven and quite nattily dressed in jeans and a colourful zipped-up jacket. After a brief encounter with his English wife Sue, who is sprawled on the drawing room divan watching television, I am led to what is, apparently, the work room. Countlesss golden and platinum discs, representative of 27 million copies sold worldwide, occupy the walls, as also a photograph of the host with Tina Charles taken in Tokyo after their triumph in the world song contest in 1978. A sophisticated music system, a guitar, and several files round off the setting. There is no desk, but a low table with a cushioned spring chair beside it. The sofa is seemingly for visitors. Biddu has a clipped Westend accent. He confesses to being a teetotaller, but courteously offers some wine, which I accept, and the interview gets underway.

Q: Could you please tell me about your background?

A: My family is from Coorg, but we've always lived in Bangalore and I went to school there. I lost my father when I was very young, but my mother is still in Bangalore.

Q: When did you develop an interest for music?

A: We formed a group in my last year in school. There were three of us. We had this dream of going into show business, and after finishing school, we ran away from home and landed up in Calcutta. On our first night there, we went to Trincas. Those were the days of the Beatles, and we had long hair and were also dressed like the pop artistes. In fact, it was our first experience of a night club. Prior to that we had never gone out (of home) after seven in the evening, and so we were quite fascinated with what we saw. The people gathered there were fascinated, too, because of our appearance. Anyhow, after a while the manager came up to us and made enquiries, and we told him we were a singing group from Bangalore. He, then, asked us to perform, which we did with the help of the band's equipment. That won us a six-month contract. I remember, we sang a Beatle song, and everybody seemed quite impressed. We had to take the contract, of course, because we had no money.

Q: What did you call yourselves?

A: Trojans. In fact, our contract was extended to a year and a half. However, we split up at that point and I started singing on my own in Bombay and Calcutta, alternately. Actually, I did better on my own than with the others.

Q: When did you think of going abroad?

A: Well, I always wanted to come to the West, because dealing as I was in Western music, my place was really here rather than in India. But getting out of the country in those days was very difficult. Incidentally, I must tell you a story here. A travel agent in Bombay came up to me and guaranteed that he would make the necessary arrangements for my passpost and ticket. He even took an advance from me for the purpose. So, reassured, I announced my impending departure to everybody, gave farewell shows and all that. But when I went to pick up my papers I found that the man had bolted and emigrated to Canada. Then, I went back to singing, saved money all over again and finally took the pilgrimage boat to Mecca, which was the only way I could get out. Thereafter, I hitch-hiked through the Middle East to Beirut, financed myself by singing there and eventually flew to Paris and then to London. When I arrived here I was penniless.

Q: That was in 1969, wasn't it? How did you get started on a career in London?

A: I didn't work for the first six months. I recall there were five of us, and we shared a flat, and cornflakes, onions and potatoes were all we survived on. It was fun, but after a while things started getting a bit desperate, so I started working in a restaurant making doughnuts. I worked very hard and saved about five hundred pounds. And with this money, I hired a studio and recorded a song with a friend, which Polydor bought. Nothing happened for a couple of years. Then the record started selling a bit. The disco sound was catching on, interest was growing, and it brought me to a stage when in 1974 I produced *Kung fu fighting* with Karl Douglas and it sold ten million copies. That really opened up my career.

Biddu with his mother. holding the golden disc of Qurbani

Q: I gather you work on an ad hoc basis with the record companies. What exactly is the arrangement?

A: That's right. I have my own publishing and production firms and what I furnish is a finished product. This way I have a complete say on matters, from writing the song, and composing the melody to appointing the singer and the instrumentalists. I don't have a studio of my own—that would cost a fortune, half a million pounds—so I hire one when required. In fact, *Disco Deewane* is the first record I am associated with, which has the singers and musicians not on contract with me but with the distributing concern—Gramophone Company in this case. Of course, it worked very well.

Q: It is remarkable that some of the best known songs to appear in the West, in recent years, have been composed by you. Which would you describe as your most popular songs?

A: All the Tina Charles hits like *I*

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love to love, *Dance little lady* and *Doctor love*. Then there is *And the vagabonds* and *I'll go where the music takes me* with Jimmy James. *Now* has brought me some recognition as an instrumental artiste. And I scored the music for two films, *The stud* and *The bitch*.

Q. Aap jaisa koi, then, was your first Hindi venture. Tell me a little about how you took on this composition?

A: It was Feroze (Khan) who came to me, asking me to give him a song for his film. He brought the lyrics with him from Bombay and suggested that I listen to a friend's daughter who lives in London. Nazia, in fact, turned out to be ideally suited for the number, and so, once I had composed the tune, we immediately proceeded with the recording. The interesting thing is, it took me less than five minutes to create the melody and the song became a super-hit. Sometimes you spend weeks conjuring up a tune and it does not sell.

Q: Were you confident you had a winner in Aap jaisa koi?

A: Well, I knew it would do well. In fact, when I gave Feroze the tape I told him: 'This is a hit' But, perhaps, I didn't expect it to become as popular as it did.

Q: But since it had become exceptionally popular have you, financially, gained a lot from it?

A: There was no question of returns. I did the assignment free. That was the understanding.

Q: But the case with Disco Deewane *was different wasn't it?*

A Yes, that was a proper contract. But the surprising thing was that even after *Aap jaisa koi*, it took a long time for us to get a concrete offer. The *Qurbani* LP was released in January last year, but it was not until ten months later that EMI came forward with their proposal. After *Aap jaisa koi* people should have realised that disco music in Hindi was a sure success. Yet, they were still willing to pay top stars phenomenal fees, instead of doing something with a much smaller outlay.

Q: But you don't know Hindi very well, do you? So how did you work out this assignment?

A: Coming from the South, I am, naturally, not very well-versed in Hindi. But I can read it well enough. In this case, I wrote the music first and gave the lyricists song ideas. Actually, Zoheb, Nazia's brother, is quite talented in terms of composing the words for songs.

Q: What are you doing next?

A: At present I am working on my own half-vocal-half-instrumental album in English, which tries to blend the East with the West. You see, Indian music is playing a very important part in Western music these days and it is also a vital factor in my compositions. Of course, I hope to do Nazia's next album, which would be around the end of the year.

Q: Do you think Nazia has a future as a singer of English songs?

A: She, perhaps, does have a future there. But for the moment I am only interested in establishing ourselves in the Hindi territory. I wouldn't like to crack the English market with her as yet.

Q: When you talk about establishing yourselves in the Hindi territory, do you also consider going to India and working there?

A: Yes, I have been toying with the idea of going to India and spending about a year there. This is likely to be in 1983. Unfortunately, I am fully booked for next year. I'd like to produce a film there and also score the music. Although I return home for a few weeks every 18 months, I have been missing India very much lately, the main reason being the weather. I could do with some decent weather. Also, that would give my children an opportunity to learn a bit more about our culture and so on.

"I always wanted to come to the West...My place was really here rather than in India."

"Even after *Aap jaisa koi*, it took a long time for us to get a concrete offer."

Q. How many children do you have?

A: Two—a five-year-old boy and a girl of six months.

Q: For how long have you been married?

A: Oh! For quite some time. I got married in 1971.

Q: One last question. What's your full name?

A: Biddu.

Q: But surely, you have surname?

A. I do, but I have never used it. It's Biddu for all purposes. I am just Biddu even in my passport. (Thereafter he tells me his second name, but with a request that it shouldn't be published.) ■

"Music is only a pastime"

ASHIS RAY met Nazia and Zoheb Hassan in London

The proposed meeting with Nazia Hassan does not turn out to be a face-to-face with the latest sensation on the Indian disco scene, but a triangular tete-a-tete involving her equally talented brother, Zoheb. The house of my quest is a "detached" building--a status symbol in this country—in the Wimbledon area with a Rolls Royce among the trappings in the driveway. Indeed, it is a butler who opens the front door and I soon discover that the abode boasts an interior well in keeping with the refinements outside. No surprise, for Nazia and Zoheb's father, Mr Bashir Hassan, is one of the richest Pakistanis. Ushered into the living room, where the golden disc for Qurbani *adorns one of the walls, I am almost immediately joined by two smiling youngsters Nazia is pretty, to say the least. Not only that, the freshness of youth adds to her loveliness. Her hair is done simply and in the subcontinental style—a parting in the middle leading to plaits on both sides—while a pair of jeans and sweater tastefully cover her lissom frame. Zoheb is also in jeans, with a check shirt and gym shoes completing the attire. Boyishly good–looking, he also appears quite athletic They are relaxed and quite articulate. Both have always topped their classes in school. With plates of kebab and biscuits to keep us company, we get down to business.*

Q**: I do not know much about you. I have listened to* **Aap jaisa koi** ***and relished it thoroughly but that's where the contact ends. (At this Zoheb thoughtfully puts on the* **Disco Deewane** ***tape and so, with the catchy tunes as a background, the chat continues.) Thus, what I would like to know first, and I am sure everyone in India shares this feeling, is: how did that initial break in* **Qurbani** ***come about?

Nazia

Nazia Hassan: "Zee"—Zeenat Aman that is—happens to be a family friend, and she and uncle Sanjay (Sanjay Khan) came over for dinner one night. Quite by chance Zoheb's guitar was lying about in the drawing room, which attracted their attention. And once they came to know we dabble a bit in music, they insisted that we put up a performance. Apparently, they were quite impressed with what they heard and mentioned this to Mr Feroze Khan, who was then making a film. Actually, I was a bit hesitant when the approach was made, but he assured me that it wouldn't take more than a couple of days. I had to take into account my studies. Anyway, one day I went ahead with the recording and that was it.

Q: Did you expect the song to be the kind of hit it became? The number, I am told, virtually made the film and the album.

NH: Not really. It was all a bit of a lark. I didn't even have a contract for what I was doing.

Q: But now that it's proved so successful, have matters been sorted out?

Zoheb Hassan. No, financially the assignment is zero.

NH: Payment is unimportant. I didn't undertake the task that seriously For me, music is only a pastime. I have never thought of making money out of it

Q· That's very magnanimous, I must say. Now, the question that must inevitably be asked is, has music been in your family?

NH. Not if you mean public performers in the family. But my grandfather, Shahid Bashiruddin Hassan, Khan Bahadur of Delhi, was a great patron of the arts By the grace of God we've had a privileged upbringing We grew up in an atmosphere where poets, artists and musicians were always coming to our house in Karachi to display their talents. Mushairas were a frequent affair. We never mingled with the poets etc because we were very young and also because ours is a very conservative family But what we witnessed from a distance, I suppose, had an influence Moreover, our life has been one of constant travel. We've basically moved from one city to another And our parents always made it a point to introduce us to the cultural aspect wherever we went. They also encouraged us to learn languages—Urdu, English and French.

Q: But disco music is somewhat de-linked from the traditional arts, isn't it? How is it that you developed an interest for this modern trend?

NH: We've been travelling mostly in the West and therefore listening to pop and all the latest records. And this created a liking for it, I guess.

Q: Who are the people who've appealed to you?

NH: I quite like Barry Manilol, Barbara Streisand and Michael Jackson.

Q: And what kind of training have you acquired?

NH: No real training. When Zoheb and I were very young, we figured in children's programmes every week on Pakistan television, and you could say, this was the starting point. Music has been a passion with us, and we've practised it at home simply to please ourselves.

Q: And Zoheb, you play the guitar and the drums, and also compose melody. How did you acquire this knowledge?

ZH: Again, no tuition.

Q. That's interesting. I can understand your learning to play instruments on your own, but surely somebody taught you the notations.

ZH: No, I only have a vague idea about the notations. Whenever a tune crosses my mind, I put it down on tape. So, all I have to do to explain it to others is to play back the recording.

Q: Your interest, Nazia, is in lyrics, isn't it? In fact, you've written some of the songs in Disco Deewane, *haven't you?*

NH: Yes, I enjoy composing lyrics. Actually, writing in general appeals to me a great deal and I am taking a course in journalism.

Q: Which is in addition to your "A" level studies. What are the subjects you are doing for your "A" levels?

NH: History, English and British government.

ZH: Don't ask me. The list is unending. I am at the American School—it's the American system there—and I have two years to go before graduating. Actually, I intend to burn all my books once I finish.

NH: Don't take him seriously. He tells this to everybody.

Q: You have been living in England for some time. Do you have lots of friends here? How have they reacted to your success?

ZH: To tell you the truth, we don't have many friends. The circumstances are such that there is no time for socialising. We meet only a few selected people. During the daytime we are in school, and after that we get down to a bit of music and then homework. Music helps to remove the day's anxieties.

NH: (*with a laugh*) Gee, anxieties! Actually, it's no snobbery, but we get very little opportunity to meet people.

Q: What about interests other than music?

ZH: I love tennis and have played for my school. I have also represented the table tennis club in school. What else? I have acted in musical plays like *The boyfriend* and *Charlie Brown* in inter-school conventions. And I have a junior green in tai kwando, which is a form of karate, and so has Nazia, and we are both working for the senior belt.

Q: And you Nazia, anything other than karate?

NH: I'm not really an outdoor type. I like karate because it keeps you fit and also teaches you self-defence (and to kick me sometimes, Zoheb adds). Of course, at present, I am learning to play the piano—to play an instrument for the first time.

Q: Well, then, I get the impression that yours is a natural flair for music, and that music is also an obsession. Now, tell me a little about Disco Deewane. *What exactly were you trying to present in that record?*

NH: I think I should clarify that the album is not all disco. There are five disco numbers in it, one reggae, one new wave, two ballads and one message song a la John Lennon—*Gayen milkar*. What we are trying to say is that music has no nationality. By singing together we can break all barriers.

Q: And this record, I gather, was released in India on 3 April. Why this

"Music has no nationality. By singing together we can break all barriers."

"Music will always be secondary. It'll be there but just as a hobby."

particular date?

NH: That was my sixteenth birthday, although I don't think this was advertised. It was meant to be a surprise for me from the company and only my mother knew about the release date.

Q: Well, I guess, the product itself was good enough to attract attention. Which reminds me, are you going to Bombay to collect the Filmfare *award?*

NH: Unfortunately, the function is right in the middle of my examinations, and as much as I would like to, there's no way I can go. But I am hoping to visit India sometime in July when we go to Karachi to see our *dadi* (grandmother). In any case, we always travel with our parents and it has to be convenient for our father to go. Even on the previous occasion when I went to India, it was with the entire family—that was for the golden disc—and it'll be the same this time, too.

Q: When in India, were you offered contracts by film producers or music directors?

NH: Yes, quite a few people came asking us to work for them. But our studies make it very difficult to accept these offers. Also, we are interested more in quality than quantity. Some wanted us to do Hindi versions of Western hits. Now, this might hoodwink the majority of the people in India, but I feel we shouldn't be doing such a thing. Of course, we are looking forward to working in India at some stage. After all there are so many gifted and more experienced musicmakers there that we are bound to benefit from coming in contact with them. But as I said, we'd rather churn out one good record in a year instead of ten indifferent ones.

"Age is no criterion. You can be ready for responsibilities at any age."

"I only have a vague idea about the notations."

Q: Have you ever come across a situation where you were being taken lightly because of being so young?

NH: Before our records came out we never discussed our age. People in India and Pakistan tend to be a little sceptical if you are too young. In our part of the world I find that people are often suppressed till they are older and frequently a talent is lost. And so, previously, whenever someone came to me and asked 'You must be 17 or 18 years old,' all I would do was to smile, not committing myself either way, and they would get the notion that I was what they thought I was. Also, when meeting outsiders, Zoheb and I would dress to look older and try to behave maturely so that people didn't go away thinking that we were nothing but a couple of school kids. Personally, I am not ashamed of still being in school. I think everybody should be proud of going to school.

ZH: (*a bit philosophically*) Age is no criterion. You can be ready for responsibilities at any age. There is no reason why people shouldn't recognise this.

Q: Have you been receiving letters from fans after Aap jaisa koi *and* Disco Deewane*?*

NH: (*somewhat animatedly*) I think this is the greatest thing about success. Letters have been pouring in from all corners. From Pakistan, India, Africa, Canada, Saudi Arabia and even Fiji. The sentiments expressed are really moving. There was one from a girl in Calcutta who wrote that she had saved up Rs 48 to buy our LP, but by the time she went to the shop, all stocks had been exhausted. She was very disappointed and asked us to send her a print. We would like to reply to all these letters personally, but with our examinations coming up we can't tackle this task forthwith. I am afraid people will just have to be patient with us.

Q: It seems your studies take precedence over everything else. But haven't you ever dreamed of becoming a singing star since you've had this inclination for music?

NH: No, we've never planned it that way.

Q: But now that fate has ordained that you come out into the open, how do you foresee your future?

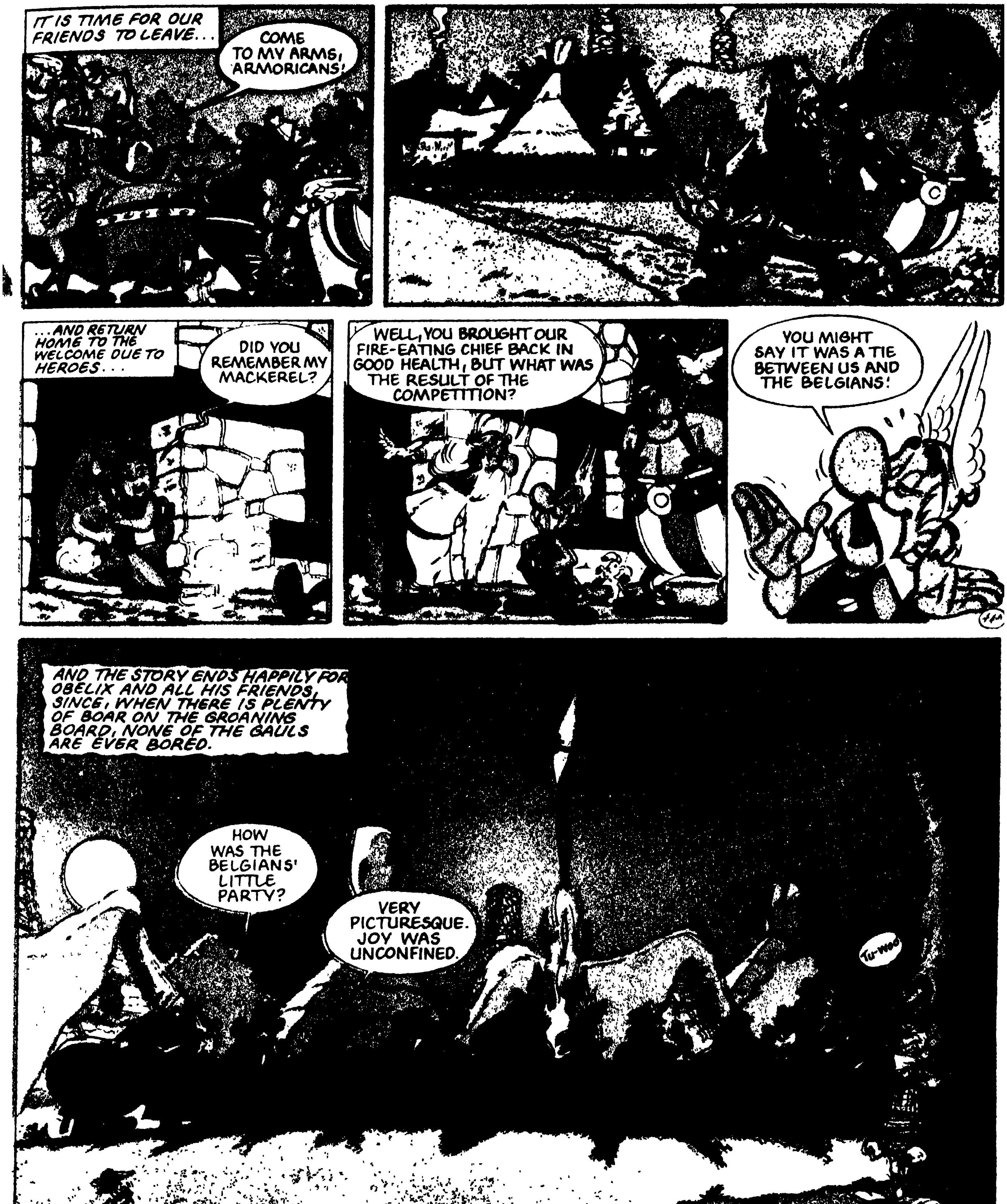
NH: I want to go to Oxford to do PPE (politics, philosophy and economics), and Zoheb wishes to go to Harvard to do business administration. My father has promised Zoheb a studio when he is 18-years-old. But he has to, eventually, take over the family business. Therefore, I think music will always be secondary. It'll be there but just as a hobby. ■

Nazia and Zoheb

BELGIUM

by GOSCINNY and UDERZO

AND THERE IS A SOUND OF REVELRY BY NIGHT.


IT IS TIME FOR OUR FRIENDS TO LEAVE...
COME TO MY ARMS, ARMORICANS!
...AND RETURN HOME TO THE WELCOME DUE TO HEROES...
DID YOU REMEMBER MY MACKEREL?
WELL, YOU BROUGHT OUR FIRE-EATING CHIEF BACK IN GOOD HEALTH, BUT WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THE COMPETITION?
YOU MIGHT SAY IT WAS A TIE BETWEEN US AND THE BELGIANS!
AND THE STORY ENDS HAPPILY FOR OBELIX AND ALL HIS FRIENDS, SINCE, WHEN THERE IS PLENTY OF BOAR ON THE GROANING BOARD, NONE OF THE GAULS ARE EVER BORED.
HOW WAS THE BELGIANS' LITTLE PARTY?
VERY PICTURESQUE. JOY WAS UNCONFINED.
Tu-Woo

Kerala: RSS vs CPI(M)

In one week in early April fifteen people were killed in Kerala as the RSS renewed its war against the CPI(M), the dominant partner in the ruling Left Democratic Front. With the opposition rallying behind the RSS and the Front cracking up, the scenario revives memories of Vimochana Samaram *which had led to the overthrow of the first elected communist government in 1959. Will history repeat itself?* TOOSHAR PANDIT *reports from Trivandrum.*

The Malabar Express arrived at the Tellicherry station after a 483-kilometre run from Trivandrum on schedule at 5.13 am on Wednesday, 1 April. Just as the train, headed further north for Mangalore, was leaving the platform after a three-minute halt, a loud report drowned the usual din of the railway station and sent people scurrying for safety. Mr M. V. Rajagopalan, the local CPI(M) MLA, who had come by the train after attending the budget session in Trivandrum had been hit in the abdomen and on his fingers by a couple of country-made bombs thrown at him while he was walking towards the exit. Curiously, nobody else among the milling crowd around him was hurt.

The suspicion immediately fell on the RSS. For one thing, the port town of Tellicherry is a RSS stronghold from where it has been carrying on a running battle against the CPI(M) almost ever since Mr E. K. Nayanar, as the leader of the six party left democratic front(LDF), coalition, was sworn in as the chief minister on 25 January last year. Further, Mr Rajagopalan was one of the 12 accused in the murder of an RSS activist, Ravindran; he had been sentenced to life imprisonment by the sessions judge in Calicut but acquitted on appeal by the High Court. He was an obvious RSS target.

The death of Ravindran had created great tension in the towns and villages surrounding Tellicherry and Calicut for about three months in September, October, and November last year. As the CPI(M) greeted the acquittal with garlands and receptions for its MLA, the RSS countered with protest marches and demonstrations. And during this period, Mr K. Sridharan, a Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) activist who had testified against Rajagopalan, was murdered. That was enough provocation for the RSS to launch an all-out offensive against the CPI(M).

First, three Marxist workers were hacked to death; in reply, three RSS activists were killed. Both sides, striving for bloody parity, struck with ruthless efficiency; only the assailants knew who the next victim would be. Countrymade bombs, sickles, daggers, knives and iron rods were the weapons. In a few cases corrosive chemicals were also used, and at least on one occasion boiling oil was poured to maim half a dozen people in a village some three kilometres from Tellicherry.

The bloodbath could not be checked despite an impressive police presence. First came the tough Malabar police to the area. Then four companies of Kerala armed police were brought in. Help was sought from the neighbouring states. Neither prohibitory orders nor round-the-clock patrolling worked. The hit-and-kill clashes stopped only after the warring adversaries were persuaded by the chief minister to cease fire and sign a truce on 6 December. By then, however, 35 persons had died and hundreds of others were nursing injuries.

But even when the truce was being signed nobody expected it to last long since the animosities between the RSS and the communists were too deep to respond to any palliative. Apart from their ideological differences, the two had been nursing a pathological hatred for one another ever since they clashed for the first time in 1958 at two important strongholds of the RSS—the coastal town of Calicut and the adjoining hill town of Palghat across the border in Tamilnadu—over a strike called by the communist leader Mr E. M. S. Namboodripad. The following year the chasm widened further as the RSS actively associated itself with the *Vimochana Samaram* (liberation struggle) launched under the leadership of the Nair Service Society chief Mannath Padmanabhan which led to the overthrow of the first elected communist government in the state on 31 July, 1959.

The ill will persisted throughout the 60s, and often manifested itself in violent clashes. Then came the split in the communist party. But to the RSS both the factions—the CPI and the CPI(M)—represented the same devil. If they had fewer clashes with the CPI it was only because the CPI had neither the militancy nor the will to fight the RSS; on occasions, the CPI even struck deals. The CPI(M) was the principal adversary.

CPI(M) MLA Rajagopal in hospital

KERALA KAUMUDI

It was this rivalry that had led to one of the worst communal riots in Kerala in 1971, in Tellicherry and Cannanore districts, after the communist-led coalition conceded a Muslim League demand for a new district, Mallapuram. At least three mosques were razed to the ground, and hundreds of shops and farms were either set on fire or wrecked. The RSS and the Jana Sangh (now, of course, the BJP) obviously could not stand the idea of a Muslim majority district.

The rivalry intensified even more following the RSS attempts to penetrate into the trade unions—the backbone of the communists—through the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. This immediately invited resistance from the Marxists, leading frequently to clashes. Only for a brief period during the Emergency, and for a few months after, did the CPI(M) and the RSS agree to bury the hatchet. They even

Police looking for arms at Tellicherry

KERALA KAUMUDI

cooperated with each other during 1978 Lok Sabha polls. But the honeymoon did not last. During the 1980 Assembly polls, the RSS opposed the Marxist-led LDF tooth and nail. And it left no one in doubt about its intentions when it launched a virulent campaign against the LDF soon after its installation. Typically, the RSS began exploiting religious sentiments, in its normal communal fashion.

Nobody, therefore, was surprised when the December ceasefire between the Marxists and the RSS was forgotten and clashes were renewed at dawn on 1 April—with that bang at the railway station. The retaliatory attacks by Marxist workers were swift and lethal. Whether it was planned that way or not, when Mrs Gandhi arrived at Calicut, barely 70 kilometres south of Tellicherry, later in the day on 1 April to address a Youth Congress(I) rally, three persons had already been killed and scores injured including the president of the local BJP unit, Lakshmanam. That was rather opportune for her. She quickly seized the opportunity to launch a political offensive against the Marxist-led government deriding it for what she considered an unusually high incidence of murders and violence. She said nothing against the RSS.

The CPI(M) quickly accused her of sheltering the RSS and even instigating the RSS to violence. On Saturday, 4 April began the CPI(M)'s six-day state plenum in Trivandrum. On the same day, the opposition parties organised a procession, starting from Hasangadi, a town where an Indian Union Muslim League (which is in opposition to the LDF) activist was killed. The opposition had also called for a statewide *bundh*, and a 550-kilometre trek to Trivandrum in 56 days. This would be the beginning of a "holy war" against the LDF.

The CPI(M) is certainly facing its worst crisis since it returned to power in Kerala, early last year. This is not only because of what the opposition is doing, or might do, but because of serious cracks within the LDF itself. During the budget session which ended on 31 March, members of the Congress(U), a major partner in the coalition, were often more critical of the administration than those in the opposition. On several tricky issues, the Marxists were left to fend for themselves. Of the five other parties in the LDF, only the CPI was of any help to the CPI(M). The internal dissension became more pronounced at a Cabinet meeting summoned by the chief minister on 8 April to review the law and order situation. By then, tension had subsided a little following another "ceasefire" between the RSS and the CPI(M) brought about, again, at the intervention of the chief minister on the previous day—one week after violence had claimed 15 lives and left scores injured. The chief minister was probably expecting to be complimented. Instead, he came under severe attack from his non-communist colleagues in the cabinet who, while arraigning the RSS for the spate of violence, also pulled up the CPI(M) for escalating the tension by retaliatory attacks. Their other grouse was that the police were either acting in a partisan manner or had been rendered ineffective by the CPI(M). So strident were the attacks that the chief minister, as a sop, offered to send a senior police official to Tellicherry, the most disturbed spot, to reinforce the police administration there. But that was hardly any consolation to those who, in fact, wanted the CPI(M) to give up the

The year of the corpses

Since the beginning of last year, according to reliable estimates, the number of political killings in the Tellicherry area alone has risen to 35. This includes the murders of 17 Marxists and 15 RSS workers. However, people not belonging to either the CPI(M) or the RSS have also become victims. For instance, 22-year-old Mohammed was butchered inside a bus as the assailants were under the impression that he was an RSS sympathiser. As the bus was going along the village road it was stopped and some men, brandishing weapons, stormed into the bus shouting, "Any RSS man here?" Many managed to escape, but not Mohammed. As he ran towards the driver's seat the killers closed in on him and, mistaking him for an RSS man trying to escape, killed him. His faint cries of "I am a Muslim" had no effect.

The *modus operandi* of both the RSS and the Marxists do not give the large contingent of policemen in the area any chance of taking precautionary measures. The killers travel in cars and when they spot someone belonging to the rival party they stop and finish him off. After that they simply drive away.

The Congress(I), however, believes that it is not as if the police is incapable of taking action. They pin the blame on the Left Front government, stating that political pressure is being applied on the police. To meet this allegation the government, has transferred some top police officials, whom the opposition accused of being partisan. For instance, Mr Kumaraswamy, DIG, northern range was transferred and Mr K. M. Joseph brought in his place.

After this shuffle the police have changed their tactics and instead of just reacting to a situation they have started taking a few precautionary measures—frisking passengers in buses and checking all cars. Police have even raided the house of a Marxist worker.

Binoo K. John

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home (police) portfolio.

That the estrangement in the ruling front cannot be wished away was recognised by the state CPI(M) plenum also. In a resolution on 9 April the CPI(M) acknowledged that "on the issues affecting the masses there are differences between our party and the Congress(U) and also with the CPI, the RSP" No wonder, Mr E. K. Nayanar failed to push through his proposal for a joint campaign by all the front constituents condemning the RSS and the Congress(I) for bloody clashes, when he broached the idea at a meeting of the LDF committee (the highest policy planning body of the Front), on 11 April Neither could he secure unqualified endorsement for his argument that his party was within its rights to defend itself against "centre-blessed" RSS

The dominant view in Kerala is that, sooner or later, the coalition will collapse under its disunity, as happened in 1969. Even among the constituents of the ruling front at least three—the Congress(U), the Kerala Congress(M) and the All India Muslim League—seem to subscribe to this view. Coalition governments have been the norm in Kerala for over two decades. There is no reason to think that it will be otherwise in the near future. Therefore, if there has to be a break from the present arrangement, the new alignment has to be with the Congress(I), since nobody can conceive of a viable alternative excluding both the CPI(M) and the Congress(I) in Kerala.

The tenuous existence of the LDF now hinges on the future moves of the non-left parties, especially the Congress(U), in the front. The Congress(U) is already under pressure from its bitterly anti-Marxist student and youth activists to pull out from the government. There is also pressure building up within the party for conciliation with the Congress(I) before Congress(U) suffers any further erosion in its strength. If the Congress(U) is still sticking to the LDF, it is only because the party's high command has not yet allowed it to pull out. Equally important is KPCC(U) leader A. K. Anthony's personal dislike for the Congress(I) leader Karunakaran. It is to pacify Anthony's feelings (and hasten his party's exit from the LDF) that the Congress(I) has promised to support a coalition led by Congress(U). And that could be the next experiment in Trivandrum. ■

'Law and order situation is normal'

E. K. NAYANAR tells TOOSHAR PANDIT

Q Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi recently held that the law and order situation in Kerala could not have been any worse Is it that bad?

A The law and order situation in the state is completely normal, but for the politics of murder of the RSS, which is receiving political backing from the Congress(I) and certain other opposition parties

Q But don't you think there have been far too many clashes between the RSS and the CPI(M) during the last 15 months?

A I won't call them clashes as such What is happening is preplanned murder by selected groups of the RSS Clashes presuppose existence of some kind of an agitation or struggle There is nothing of that kind in Kerala

Q I presume that explains the murder of the Marxist activists But, how do you account for the death of the RSS activists? Isn't it a fact that the Marxists too had been hitting back?

A No The Marxist party is against the politics of murder The party has been carrying on agitations and struggles against the policies of the Congress(I) for the last so many years But at no time has the party taken to the path of murder politics. Regarding the RSS also, the position of the Marxist party is the same

Q. If that is so, why is it that even some of the constituents in the ruling LDF think otherwise?

A. This is far from the truth.

Q There was stiff opposition both in the cabinet as also in the LDF committee, even from the CPI, to your efforts to condemn the RSS unequivocally for the violence Doesn't it show that even the constituents of the LDF are not satisfied with the situation?

A. Perhaps some of the constituents have not been as strident as the CPI(M) in condemning the RSS. But then, the LDF is a united front of different parties on the basis of a minimum programme. Naturally we have differences—even on such issues as implementation of the District Administration Act, which is one of LDF's declared programmes

Q If you are against the politics of murder, as you say you are, while condemning the RSS should you not also condemn your own partymen who might be responsible for retaliatory attacks?

A. What? You expect me to equate a secular and nationalist political party with an obscurantist communal party? This I am not prepared to do

Q What intrigues me is, how could the RSS gain so much strength as to challenge your party in a state which has traditionally been a leftist stronghold?

A Yes in north Kerala, the RSS seems to have gained some strength—not in terms of popular support but certainly they have some dedicated activists The reason is the leftists have not been able to take root in the neighbouring Karnataka from where the RSS is run

Q But there are people who believe that the RSS ranks have swelled because many young Marxists have switched over to it, as your party is not as militant as before. These people also believe that you have lost considerable support of the fishermen and backward communities in north Kerala to the RSS, and that is why the CPI(M) and the RSS are fighting a running battle. How far is this true?

A Absolutely wrong. The memberships of our party as well as of our mass organisations have, indeed, increased. In a recent by-election in north Kerala the CPI(M) candidate won by a handsome margin against the combined opposition of the RSS and the Congess(I). The truth is, the Congress(I) has chosen the RSS as its battering ram to destabilise the present government. And that is what has made the RSS bolder.

Q: What makes you think that the Congress(I) is behind the RSS?

A: Now look, the situation in Tellicherry area was absolutely peaceful after 6 December, 1980. Then violence erupts suddenly on the day the Prime Minister arrives in Kerala. And, what does she do? Instead of condemning the RSS, who lit the fire, she attacks us—the victims. If the Prime Minister and the Congress(I) had come out wholeheartedly against the anti-secular and anti-democratic forces, I am sure things would have been different

Q Is it true that the police officers' association has complained that they are not allowed to function impartially?

A. There were some reports to this effect in some newspapers. But the office-bearers of the association promptly denied them. The police are free to act

Q: If that is so, why should the constituents of the LDF insist on transferring the home portfolio from the CPI(M) to any of the other constituents? Doesn't that imply that they are not satisfied with the police?

A: I do not think either CPI(M) or the police is acting in a partisan manner. The police is neither under any restraint nor any compulsion.

Q: What steps do you have in mind to meet any possible recurrence of violence?

A: The politics of conspiracy and murder cannot be met by the government machinery alone. It is a political and social challenge against secularism and democracy which should be met by the organised vigilance of the entire people.

Q: How long, do you think, is your ministry going to last?

A: I do not think there is any serious threat to my ministry

Will AMU's VC be the scapegoat?

The season opens for vote-buying

Aligarh: Politics has done it again. The misguided hunt for the Muslim vote has extracted a heavy price. It has killed a 20-year-old student, injured 28 others and disrupted academic life indefinitely by subjecting the Aligarh Muslim University to unprecedented violence.

Twelfth May saw a hour-long battle between the police and the youth—how many of the over 3,000 strong mob were students could not be determined. Brickbats were hurled from the road and rooftops near the Vice Chancellor's lodge. The *lathi* wielding policemen found themselves hopelessly outnumbered, their *lathis* useless against the flying missiles. Tear gas shells were burst, the police claimed, but a strong breeze rendered the gas ineffective. The students were everywhere. The SP (City) Mr P. P. Siddhu and the ADM (City) Mr Lal Bahadur Tiwari with their band of policemen, were cornered, but the PAC platoons stood by and watched. One ventured forward only to retreat. As the mob converged on the hapless police party, the ADM panicked, as indeed greater men might have, and shouted 'Open fire.' The CRP fired four rounds into the crowd. One bullet felled Mohammed Aftab, a BSc second year student. He died later in hospital. Another hit, or grazed, Ahsanullah, a student of the same class, on the neck. He is in hospital with four others injured in the brickbatting and *lathi* charge. They are also under arrest.

Police reinforcements were rushed from Delhi and Uttar Pradesh—CRP, BSF and PAC. By the next morning the campus was teeming with policemen and politicians. Home Minister Zail Singh was the first to arrive from Delhi by helicopter. He left after announcing an ex-gratia payment of Rs 15,000 to the dead student's family in Meerut. Hot on his heels came the ministers from Uttar Pradesh—to assess the situation, they said.

Tuesday was the second day of the students' court arrest programme to demand the resignation of the Vice Chancellor Mr Syed Hamid and Professor Irfan Habib (SUNDAY 1 February). The first day passed peacefully with about 50 students trying to court arrest. The police refused to arrest them and they left. Mr L. B. Tiwari said he told them, "How can we arrest you, you have not broken any rules." The second day the students broke the rules. Initially 70 students arrived at the VC lodge. Mr Siddhu and Mr Tiwari were present with two companies of the CRP for Mr Hamid and the pro-Vice Chancellor's protection. The police again refused to arrest the boys. They then tried to break the police cordon and enter the VC lodge. As the two groups scuffled at the gates several hundred students watching from a distance began pelting the police with stones and bricks. And the free for all began.

The university was closed for the second time this year by Mr Hamid, a harried man whose only disqualification is his honesty, dedication and integrity.

The students, after the firing, ran into the hostels. The student leaders, who were not present at the spot, went to work, furiously churning out press statements. The police is to blame, we are innocent, cried the statement signed by the former president of the students union, Irfanullah Khan. (He tried, unsuccessfullly, for the Lok Dal ticket for the Lok Sabha elections from Bareilly.)

The students gathered at their headquarters, Sir Syed Hall, to determine the future course of action even as the authorities held meetings at Mr Hamid's residence for the same purpose. The silent majority of students packed its bags to go home when came Irfanullah Khan's decision: no one would leave the campus. Those caught leaving were threatened, some beaten. Several students managed to leave on the sly. Realising that they could not control all the students, the leaders decided to restrict their 'influence' to mainly two halls—Sir Syed Hall and Habib Hall. Here some 1,600 students are virtually being held captive. Large locks serve a dual purpose—preventing non-students from entering the hostels and the students from leaving. Only after these locks are opened or broken will it be known how many of the 1,600 were willing prisoners.

Just a few days before his call to the students to stay in the hostels Irfanullah Khan had called for *hijrat*, directing the students to leave the hostels in protest. The term *hijrat* was used to present a Quranic analogy for the present situation, but despite the bombast, the students ironically had not left then. They are leaving now. Official estimates place the number of students in the campus at 4,000 now.

These purposeless directions reflect the student leaders' inherent confusion. What Irfanullah Khan had said would be a peaceful agitation, pompously declaring, "We are students of Aligarh, proud of our roots and traditions, we condemn violence" turned out to be just short of a bloodbath. It brought in the police, and worse, the politicians. It closed the university,

FOCUS

AMU campus

disrupted academic life and once again brought the AMU into the limelight giving political and communal forces another opportunity to exploit the situation. After all, the university represents the Muslim vote in many people's minds!

The campus has not seen normalcy, except in brief snatches, since last year. After being closed in January the university reopened on 2 April, classes continued till 17 April when the students disrupted the Executive Council meeting, and expressed their anger by deflating tyres of vehicles belonging to the EC members. On 24 April the Vice Chancellor dissolved the students union for which elections were overdue. The students retaliated with a demonstration outside his residence in which two provosts were beaten up. One incident followed another. Teachers were threatened, their houses stoned; students not wishing to take part in the agitation were given a sound thrashing. On 7 May a large mob armed with stones arrived at Mr Hamid's residence and let fly: windows were smashed, telephone lines cut and a few items reported stolen. The students brought out a small television set, and insisted it was part of a close circuit network operated from the VC lodge .too many detective novels perhaps? A voltage stabiliser was exhibited as a transmitter.

Mr Hamid called the police after the mob dispersed One company was posted for his protection. This was increased to two companies from 11 May when the boys began their court arrest programme.

In the fortnight of violence, nine FIR's were lodged by the university authorities naming 13 students. Three FIR's were registered under Section 395, IPC pertaining to dacoity. Two students, including the former general secretary of the students union M. A. Fatmi, were arrested under this. Five students were arrested by the police under Section 151 of the IPC after the violence on 7 May.

In view of this the 12 May incident was perhaps inevitable. It has served to bring, politics to the surface. Teachers, hoping for a spell in the Vice Chancellor's chair or upset about Mr Hamid's disciplinary approach which kept them at a distance, have united to form what is now a powerful lobby, and they prefer to work from behind the scenes inciting the students on the frontlines. It is said that several statements issued by the students were in fact written by the teachers. The lobby has made its presence public by voicing its 'shock' at the incident and leading deputations to the visiting politicians to urge them to get rid of Mr Hamid. Mr Rehman Ali Khan, a senior professor of the law department met, amongst others, the minister of state for home affairs from Uttar Pradesh, Mr Rajendra Tripathy. So did the local Lok Dal MLA. The students are innocent, the police firing unjustified, the Vice Chancellor 'inept,' was the refrain.

The lobbying does seem to have paid some dividends. The allegation that intervention by the district administration and police was uncalled for has made some sense to the political bosses in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi and a judicial inquiry, ordered by the UP government, will fix responsibility for the incidents, in view of these allegations. A retired judge of the Allahabad Court, Mr Gur Saran Lal Srivastava, will conduct the inquiry.

The Muslim cause has placed the students of this Muslim University (contributing to the education of mainly local students with a sprinkling from other parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) in great demand. Political parties, with the help of some Muslim leaders, have succeeded in turning this academic institution into a political institution, a symbol of the Muslim cause and therefore a getter of the Muslim vote, to an extent where the AMU Bill has come to occupy a place alongside the question of the Muslim Personal Law.

Because of this the students here are a pampered lot with perhaps more say in the administration and policy decisions of the university than students anywhere else. The authorities in the past encouraged this, realising that this was the best way to appease not only the students but through them the political bosses. Mr Hamid tried to change the university into an academic institution. By strictly enforcing rules stipulated in the long forgotten Constitution of the university, he strove to restore academic standards. This was stoutly resisted by the students and by the teachers' lobby with the backing of the political parties.

The forthcoming by-elections to the Lok Sabha and Assembly only made the students aware of their own importance. The Prime Minister's son sent for them. He held three meetings with members of their Action Committee, and he was assisted in his discussions by Vijay Dhar, Vijay Singh and Salman Khursheed. He promised to restore normalcy, the students said, if they helped in the by-elections. "The offer was conditional so we refused," said the students. "We spurned Rajiv Gandhi."

After the university closed in January the students had an audience with almost all Congress(I) leaders from the Prime Minister downwards. The campus was visited by leaders of other political parties. The Lok Dal promised election tickets. Other parties issued statements in their support.

The students were riding a high horse. The world was theirs. Their wishes were commands. So when the university reopened the agitation began again. There was a difference, though. Academic issues had been cleverly interwoven with political considerations. The demand for the suspension of Irfan Habib, though it still stands, has taken a back seat. The students are now more vociferous in demanding the resignation of the Vice Chancellor. The demand is on grounds of ability. The real reason is elsewhere: students say that he is "a Congress(I) stooge." Vulgar posters outside Sir Syed Hall, attack the Vice Chancellor for his alleged cooperation with the ruling party. If the CPM was the issue in January, the Congress(I) is the issue in May—predictably, with the by-elections scheduled for June.

The situation in the campus is far from normal. Thirty eight companies of the police have been posted. Top police officers are personally supervising the arrangements. The university authorities are commuting between Aligarh and Delhi for meetings with the home minister, amongst others. One wonders if the matter will ever resolve itself; or will a Vice Chancellor committed to academic discipline be made the scapegoat of political connivings?

Shenaz Syed

ANDHRA PRADESH

Policemen and home minister fight it out

Hyderabad: The city has a new police commissioner, Mr C G. Saldanha. He has been brought in replacing Mr P. V. Pavithran on 2 May 1981. The incident that led to the replacement of the police commissioner had all the ingredients of a thriller. It started on the night of 28 April when a gang of 26 anti-social elements under the leadership of Mr Kotha Das went on a rampage in the heart of Hyderabad. The gang entered bars and movie theatres, looted money and ransacked furniture They continued their pillage for more than an hour moving about from place to place in four vehicles. That evening the law-enforcing authorities seemed to be sleeping. Although the police knew the license numbers of the vehicles the *goondas* could not be arrested. It was not until 29 April that the police caught eight members of the Kotha Das gang. Gang-leader Das was arrested the next day under the NSA. The city police attributed the rampage to gang rivalry between two groups.

Mr Kotha Das was interrogated and he gave a confessional statement, excerpts of which were published in the local *Indian Express*. Mr Kotha Das claimed that he had the support of the state home minister, Mr K Prabhakar Reddy, in his activities. Later, in a second confessional statement, Mr Das disclaimed his earlier version saying that he had made the statement under duress from deputy commissioner of police, Mr S N Chenoy

The Kotha Das incident figured in the state Legislative Assembly twice: on 30 April and 6 May The Congress(I) legislators, understandably, launched scathing attacks on the former police commissioner, Mr Pavithran, for his moves to "blackmail the home

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K. Prabhakar Reddy

minister by invoking his name in the Kotha Das affair."

This naturally led to a collision between Mr Pavithran and Mr Prabhakar Reddy. But the beginning of the controversy can be traced to 30 April. After announcing that the director-general of police, Mr M. V. Narayana Rao, would probe the Kotha Das incident and identify the "forces" behind the gang in the state Assembly, Mr Prabhakar Reddy is believed to have chided Mr Pavithran during a meeting in which the chief minister and top officials were present.

The next morning, 1 May, Mr Pavithran met the chief secretary, Mr S R Ramamurthy. In the evening he was reportedly asked by the DGP, Mr Narayana Rao, to proceed on three weeks' leave and hand over charge to Mr C G Saldanha. On 3 May, the *Indian Express*, carried a front-page news item headlined. "Is AP Home Minister behind the (Kotha Das) gang?" The report carried excerpts from the "interrogation" report wherein Mr Kotha Das claimed: "My gang politically supports Shri Prabhakar Reddy, the present home minister, irrespective of his party affiliation . . we have the support of Shri Prabhakar Reddy, home minister. Hence we could act so boldly at all times . " The report also said that the home minister had objected to his name being dragged into the affair and hence had replaced Mr Pavithran. "The home minister feels that the interrogation report has been inspired by Mr Pavithran to cover up his own lapses as police commissioner... circles close to Mr Prabhakar Reddy even suspect Mr Pavithran of 'tailoring' the interrogation report to preempt moves to shift him from his post. The move to shift Mr Pavithran has been on the cards for sometime on the ground that he has been dabbling in politics..." said the report.

On 3 May, the DGP, Mr Narayana Rao, called a press conference to deny the involvement of the home minister in the Kotha Das gang. Mr Rao also said that he was inquiring into the "motive and inducements" behind the alleged confession statement. Immediately after the press conference, deputy commissioner of police, Mr Appa Rao, rushed to Chanchalguda Central Jail to meet Mr Kotha Das. Mr Appa Rao returned with a new confession recorded at 6 30 pm on that day in which Mr Das denied whatever he had said in his earlier statement. He even said that he had been tutored by a police official, Mr S. N. Chenoy, to claim connections with the home minister. In return he had been promised his release within two months. The home minister said, "The former police commissioner is said to have talked of politically-backed elements and alleged political interference. It is unfortunate. Do you think a minister can throw to the winds his reputation, his party's and his government's prestige? To say that I am supporting them (the *goondas*) is inspired and motivated I do not even know them." Speaking about the removal of the police commissioner Mr Reddy said: "We could have even sacked him (Mr Pavithran). We merely replaced him. He has been asked to go on leave. In the last three months, there was a deterioration in the law and order in the twin cities (of Hyderabad and Secunderabad). The chief secretary had hinted to Mr Pavithran to check the activities of anti-social elements. I had also told him that I could get him the names of criminals against whom stringent action was necessary. But, unfortunately, things did not improve."

Mr Pavithran, meanwhile, has refuted the charges of DGP Mr Narayana Rao that the law and order situation in the city was worsening. He has denied having made any adverse remarks against the home minister. Mr S. N. Chenoy, DCP (anti-*goonda* squad) who recorded the confessional statement of Mr Kotha Das denies the allegations made by Mr Das. Mr Chenoy says that Mr Das had recorded the statement when he was alone with him. The police official claims that he reached the police station when some junior officer were interrogating Mr Das. When Mr Chenoy heard Mr Das saying he had the backing of the home minister, he ordered the junior officers to go out and "in secrecy" recorded the confession of Mr Das.

But the manner in which senior police officials are trading charges has created a split in the entire police force. Some owe their allegiance to Mr Pavithran while the others to Mr Narayana Rao. And the home minister has now come out with the statement that he would resign if his links with Mr Kotha Das were established. Till then the city and the state wait with bated breath and continue to face the deteriorating law and order situation. Under the new police commissioner, Mr C. G. Saldanha, there have been robberies and a gangster arrested under the NSA has escaped from police custody. All this within the first week of his taking over.

Syed Majeedul Hasan

BBC FILM

Is the MP tribals' film a slander?

Raipur: When the BBC team approached the government of India and the union home ministry, for permission to prepare the 50-minute-long *Portrait of a Muriyan Village*, a film that was to depict the uniqueness of Muriyan culture of Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh, the team members readily agreed to abide by the conditions imposed by the home ministry. The first condition was that the BBC unit would not film or take any photographs inside any room. The reason was perhaps to prevent the filming of the *Ghotul Gudi*, a sacred organisation of the tribals. The institution, as it is, is likely to be misinterpreted and taken in the wrong spirit, especially by foreigners, which was why the union home ministry had laid the first condition. However, hardly had a month elapsed when it was feared that not only had the team members taken photographs and films inside the *Ghotul*, but that some highly objectionable and distorted scenes had been re-

Tribal girls inside the Ghotul

corded which were bound to project a false image of Indian tribals abroad. The fears were first expressed by Dr R N. Mishra of the department of anthropology, tribal welfare, in the home ministry of the government of India. Between 12 and 19 April, Dr Mishra approached several authorities in an attempt to draw their attention to the fact that the British team had in fact taken films within the *Ghotul*. Earlier, in a meeting the director of the film, Christopher Curling had declined to show the script of the film to Dr Mishra on the plea that the script had already been cleared by the government of India. Dr Mishra's fears were confirmed by the superintendent of police. It was reported that the unit had, in fact, installed powerful reflectors and tape recorders within the Taragaon *Ghotul* and a network of electric wires were linked to a powerful generator near the *Ghotul*. The sub-divisional officer of Narayanpur too held that the team members had overstepped the conditions laid down by the union home ministry. It was only the collector of Bastar, Mr A.P. Mishra, who visited Taragaon on 15 April, who said that only some traditional folk dances, and nothing objectionable has been recorded.

Meanwhile a confidential report sent by Dr Mishra to the home ministry with a copy to the collector of Bastar, found its way to the BBC unit. The director was furious and threatened Dr Mishra to be prepared for the music he would face at Delhi, especially since he (the director) was close to the PM's family Not long after, Dr Mishra was directed to return to Delhi. The BBC team further tried to influence the press indirectly Following the publication of brief reports by PTI and UNI on the basis of reports filed by their Jagdalpur correspondents and a report in the *National Daily* of New Delhi, the BBC team approached the Bhopal authorities to request the press not to carry on with the matter. But, the press refused to comply. Shortly afterwards, *Bastar Times*, a weekly of Jagdalpur, published by two veteran journalists, Ravi Shankar Bajpayee and Kirit Doshi, published a report revealing that the BBC film unit had distributed money to the tribal youths of Taragaon for liquor. They got totally drunk The BBC unit then filmed them at midnight in compromising positions. Mahesh Pathak, another journalist of Taragaon told the visiting reporters of *Bastar Times* that the tribal youths were stripped before filming began inside the *Ghotul*.

While some of the tribal youths have denied being filmed in compromising positions by the BBC, Harichand, a tribal youth who had earlier worked with the BBC unit told pressmen that the acting village Patel of the Taragaon Fasiya had distributed money to the tribal youths The Patel himself has, in fact, confessed that the BBC had taken films inside the *Ghotul*. The reporters had further acquired taperecorded statements of several others who stated that BBC unit members were seen moving about freely in cars with tribal youths who were dead drunk.

Armed with the evidence that this BBC unit, like its predecessors, was trying to project a distorted image of India abroad, the reporters approached the divisional commissioner of Bastar about possible actions against the unit. But the commissioner, for reasons known only to himself, said, "I will look into the matter."

Subsequently, the collector of Bastar was directed to probe the matter. On 8 May, the issue came up in the Rajya Sabha. Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, the minister for external affairs, said during question hour that no objectionable scenes had been filmed by the foreign team and stressed that he had with him the entire material and the reports of the collector of Bastar.

However, when asked by the opposition members if the government would prosecute the team members if it was found that they had violated the conditions, the minister failed to give a direct answer. Mr Ladli Mohan Nigam, of the Lok Dal, had in the meantime obtained and produced a photograph of a *Ghotul* where cameras had been installed and alleged that the team had violated the terms. The matter is yet to come to a head, and all that the ministry of external affairs has by way of assurance that no objectionable material will find its way to the foreign audience is just a verbal assurance to the ministry that if necessary, the film will be submitted for preview to the Delhi authorities. The film, at the time of writing, is being processed in London.

M. V. Kher

Psychics take over after Hinckley

Washington: At least ten psychics claimed to have predicted the assassination attempt on US President Ronald Reagan. And, not surprisingly, they make no bones about trumpeting their claims

Ms Tamara Rand of Los Angeles, California, was the first when she aired the very next day after the assassination attempt that she had predicted the assassination on 6 January 1981. Ms Rand claimed that she had made the prediction on a popular Richard Maurice show in which she had predicted a thud in Mr Reagan's chest during the last few days of March and that the assassin would be a fair-haired "Jack Humpley." Her claim was backed by the host of the program. But subsequently the prediction was exposed as a hoax and it was established that she had in fact, taped the program on 31 March, the day after the shooting.

But, Ms Rand's faux pas did not prevent other psychic buffs weaned on the success of Mrs Jeane Dixon, who made her reputation and fortune on her much-publicised claim of having predicted the assassination of President Kennedy to boast about their predictions on the Reagan assassination.

Among the ten psychics are Ms Noreen Reiner from Virginia who claimed to have aired her prediction over radiostation WXAM in Charlottesville. The prediction in the broad cast, in fact, was deliberately nebulous "I keep feeling problems in his chest It is not a natural problem—perhaps it may come from the outside ... I feel it may happen in a 4-month period." But she claims to have been more certain off the air. Program host, Mr Josh Cohen, says she told him that Mr Reagan would be shot in March.

She didn't like to tell Mr Reagan, before he was elected that he would be shot, she says. But, she claims to have made the definite prediction in a January broadcast saying he would be shot in the upper left chest area and would survive. She claims to have made the prediction to a Canadian newspaper on 10 March.

Another psychic, Ms Eugenia Macer-Story of New Jersey, in hindsight recalled sensing the danger facing Mr Reagan She said, "I saw Reagan walking out of a Washington hotel, in an area with brownstone houses I saw he would be the target of an assailant who carried a handgun, and the attempt would come early in Reagan's term."

In Denver, Colorado, not far from assassin John Hinckley's home, psychic Ms Lou Wright claims to have seen the assassination attempt during a meditation session three weeks before it happened She is also reported to have beeped the prediction over the Denver radio station, KIMN Two psychics of the newspaper, *Globe*, also claim to have predicted the assassination attempt Ms Sybil Leek claims to have predicted that Mr Reagan would be felled by a single bullet. Another psychic, Ms Barbara Donchess's advice to Mr Reagan was, "Reagan would be better off and live to a ripe old age if he stayed home and fished."

Mrs Jeane Dixon, unfortunately for her image, chose to keep her prophecy close to her heart, "because she couldn't bear the thought of anything happening to our nation's leader,"—a sentiment which did not prevent her from predicting Mr John F Kennedy's death 18 years ago But, she slipped A Washington businesswoman Ms Mary Himmelfarb claims that Mrs Dixon made the prediction to her in December 1980 She herself claims that she had hinted at the possibility by saying that Mr George Bush would become the President one day—via the Vice-presidency, not the ballot box. Many psychics, including Mrs Dixon, predict that Mr Reagan is still in danger and there would be other attempts, which are more likely to succeed throughout 1981. Only Mrs Jeane Dixon has come forward with specific dates of future attacks on Mr Reagan She says that the main danger is between June 15-17, June 24-30 and July 16-25.

Achal Mehra

RADIO COMMERCIALS

Price hike will ruin small businessmen

New Delhi: Rates for radio commercials have been increased by the AIR authorities with effect from 16 April 1981. As a result, a 15-second spot in the prime time slot will now cost Rs 7,200 against the previous cost of Rs 2,880 a month

S. M. and Sons, a Delhi textile shop, one of those hit by the advertisement rate hike

The primary reason for this enormous escalation, which is as high as 600% in some cases, is a long overdue revision in the rate structure. The last hike took place six years ago. Since then, the operational cost of the Commercial Broadcasting System (CBS) of the AIR has increased by 70%. "It's purely an exercise in rationalising the old rate structure," explains Mr U.L. Baruah, the recently retired director-general, AIR.

Other changes have also been made. The old rate structure had four classifications: Bombay-Pune-Nagpur, Calcutta Delhi and the rest, which included all other stations. The new rate structure has five classifications. Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and other cities like Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Pune, and finally Cuttack. Jodhpur, Ranchi and Srinagar. According to the revision in the rate structure, an advertiser will now have to buy time separately for Bombay, Nagpur and Pune, if he wants to broadcast his commercials over the three stations.

In addition, in place of the three time categories, there are now four time categories: super A special, super A, A and B. Uniform rates for Sundays and weekdays have also been introduced following the finding of a survey conducted by the AIR's Audience Research Unit, which revealed that Sunday listening, particularly in towns with television is not necessarily higher than on weekdays. The revision comes as a surprise especially in the face of the government's declared policy of encouraging small businessmen and entrepreneurs. Neddless to say, the small traders and businessmen will be hit most. As Komal GB Singh. Delhi's most popular western music compere, till last year put it, "...the new rates will weed out the smalltimers—the sari shop owners, the tailors, the small-scale industrialists—whom radio has given tremendous mileage." One perceivable effect of the hike is that the small-and medium-scale industrialists are shifting from radio to television as the medium for their commercials Television rates, after the hike are relatively lower than those for radio. Further, once the contracts with AIR expire, the small entrepreneurs are not renewing them again. As a result, business of small and medium advertising agencies has been adversely affected.

But, even as the demands for special rates for small advertisers fill the air, AIR estimates a doubling of its present revenues of Rs 12.4 crores following the hike. The inflated funds are expected to be used for the betterment of AIR. Said Mr Baruah, "All artists' payments will be made from the NLF (Non-Lapsable Fund), which will also finance the overhaul and replacement of hardware, additional improved software and even new CBS stations if we are allowed to ...". It is even hoped that finally AIR may be able to pay bonus to its employees like the Post and Telegraph and railway departments.

Vivek Sengupta

GOA

Was the CM given a necklace?

Panaji: Goa chief minister, Mr Pratap Singh Rane, is troubled by the wranglings of his own partymen. Perhaps to buy time and peace, he has offered the proposal for a cabinet reshuffle to Mr G. K. Moopanar, the Congress(I) general secretary looking after Congress(I) politics in Goa. He has proposed the dropping of law minister, Mr Dayanand Narvekar, and information minister, Mr Oildo Aguiar, because the ministers along with their camp followers, released a story to the *West Coast Times* maligning the CM. The story alleged that a necklace worth over a lakh of rupees, believed to have been made by the famous Goan jewellers, Sirsat Brothers, had been gifted by a major private sector industrial concern, to Mr Rane's wife. The concern would in return receive official favours for setting up a factory in Valpoi, a hilly *taluka* in Mr Rane's home constituency.

The CM, however, has refused to deny the story saying that he is above taking bribes primarily because his family—remotely connected with the Gwaliors—has heirlooms worth lakhs of rupees. Nevertheless, Mr Rane has come down hard on the *West Coast Times*. The Economic Development Corporation (Mr Rane is its chairman) served a notice to Timbols, a mining group, which also owns the newspaper, to pay their arrears promptly or face the consequences. Perhaps, as an act of atonement, Timbols closed down the newspaper. Embarrassingly for the CM, who is now facing adverse public reaction for the closure of the newspaper, it has now been established that Timbols were not the only defaulters but were the only ones to be pulled up. As for the necklace, Sirsat Brothers, deny that they supplied it or intervened in the transaction.

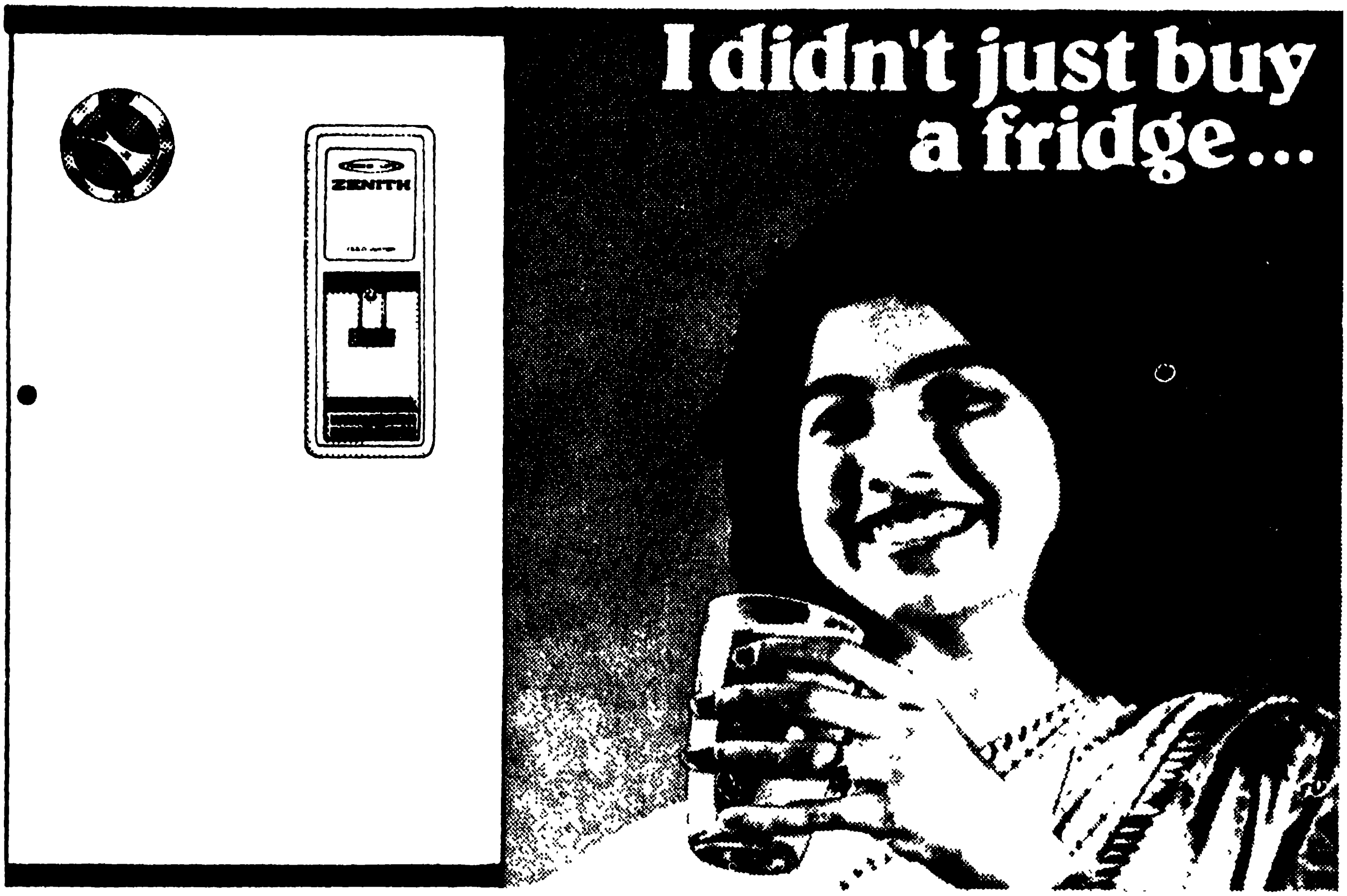
Mr Rane has, in the meanwhile, offered the two vacant cabinet posts to Mr Babu Naik and Dr Wilfred D'Souza. Mr Naik, Dr D'Souza and Mr Rane had constituted the powerful triumvirate of the Congress(U). Later when the party merged with the Congress(I) there was a bitter struggle for supremacy between Mr Naik and Dr D'Souza. As a result, Dr D'Souza was ousted from the presidency of the Pradesh Congress Committee. However, Mr Rane is now supporting Dr D'Souza as the latter has the support of a large number of Congress(I) MLAs.

Knowing what is likely to befall them soon, Mr Narvekar and Mr Aguiar are not keeping quiet: in a Congress(I) high command meeting they charged Mr Rane and his followers with maladministration. Mr Rane however, stoically accepted that such allegations must first be proved. Only then would he take action.

Mario Cabral e Sa

What makes Fedders Lloyd Zenith a world class refrigerator?

Confessions of a Zenith owner...2



I bought a water cooler as well.

When we bought Zenith 165 litre, we were bowled over by its features. But as we began handling it, we thought of them more in terms of convenience.

I am afraid, you're not very clear.

Let me explain. On the face of it the built-in water cooler with a capacity of 3.4 litres may seem like a novelty. But after using the fridge we realise the advantages and the convenience of avoiding bottles that break, especially when you have children at home.

And what about the savings on electricity?

I was coming to that—it comes to as much as 25%. Just because you don't need to open the door as often as you normally do Amazing!

It also does your compressor a lot of good.

Yes. Takes less toll on the compressor. Also there's an auto-defrost system that helps start fridge even when it is under defrosting. And a roll bond freezer that helps quicker chilling.

Are you aware of the built-in voltage stabilizer* ?

I don't understand the voltage fluctuation, but it does give me a feeling of safety; and it's good that it's built-in.

Anything else you'd like to mention?

Yes. Some seemingly minor points like a tilting bottle rack, removable butter and cheese boxes and egg racks.

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GOOD NEWS

Houses for poor

The Rajasthan government has approved seven schemes for building housing complexes for weaker sections. The Rajasthan Urban and Building Tax department has sanctioned six housing schemes for Jaipur and one for Kota They include 826 houses. The biggest complex of 796 houses, a school building, park and other facilities is to be built by Messrs National Engineering Industries Limited, Khatipura

Blind man becomes advocate

Panchapakesan (26) who is blind, had lost nearly a year after completing his law studies, since no lawyer was willing to accept him as a 'junior.' Then he accidentally met an advocate, V. Narayanaswamy who took an interest in him and enabled him to enrol as a lawyer in court Panchapakesan is now Narayanaswamy's junior and regularly accompanies him to court He is also Madras's first blind lawyer The Bar Association might even return his enrolment fees as a gesture of goodwill

Doctor Saviour

A thoracic surgeon's offer might save the life of a poor labourer's daughter Vijayakumari, daughter of Gopalan, a rubber-tapper, was found to have a defective heart which required the aid of a pacemaker For a long time it seemed Vijayakumari had no option but to wait for death—till Dr R S Menon, superintendent of the Medical College Hospital, Trivandrum, came forward with a godsend, a pacemaker he had brought from Europe which he offered to Vijayakumari, free. Now, all the girl needs is a "lead" pacemaker (available in India for about Rs 1,000) to be operated on For this, contributions have been pouring into the office of *Kerala Kumudi*, which published her story

Award for Tea Board

The Indian Tea Board has won the internationally known Food Europe award for 1981, given by *El Comestible*, a Madrid food magazine The Tea Board has won the award in recognition of its promotional role in Europe conducted through its offices in London and Brussels. It is the fourth Indian organisation to get this award for outstanding performance in the tea industry. The award—a bronze and marble sculpture by the well-known Spanish artist Martin Perillan—will be presented on 8 June.

Tribals' own school

The tribals of Michassukhai in Bhanupratappur subdivision of Bastar district, Madhya Pradesh, have started a school on their own—without help from the government. The villagers, most of whom are illiterate, had made various representations to the government asking for funds to start a school. These, however, were ignored Finally, the frustrated villagers found a novel solution: they approached an unemployed educated youth of a neighbouring village, Ghotiya, and requested him to settle in the village and teach the children. The only problem was that they could not offer him any salary. Instead, they would give him 250 gms of rice everyday. The youth accepted. Recently, the school has completed one year in existence.

Philanthropic designs

T. M. Ghate, a prizewinning architect who has helped solve the housing problems of lower income group families in Padnampur village near Durg, in Raipur division (MP), is now designing houses free of charge—provided they cost under Rs 10,000 to build. Ghate won the first national award of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) for his brilliant layout and design of housing estates being built by the MP housing board. Ever since, Ghate has been using his talent in low-cost housing to help lower middle-class wage earners—teachers, clerks and peons, without taking fees. Several social and educational organisations in the Chhattisgarh region are taking advantage of this unusual offer from an architect who is more worried about social problems than getting a cushy job.

500,000 dollar offer to Indian sculptor

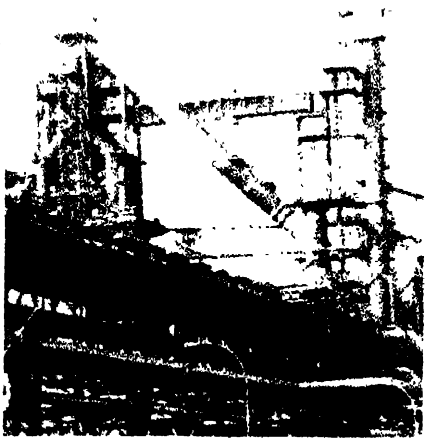
Ranjan Gopal Shenoy, the octogenarian sculptor of south India whose 27.5 metre high statue of the Jain saint Bahubali adorns his hometown Karkala, Karnataka, has won a prize US $500,000 order from Japan that will earn India valuable foreign exchange. The chief priest of Tsubosaka-dera temple in Nara, Japan, wants Shenoy to sculpt 3,000 granite Bodhisattwa statues Most of the statues are to be only two feet high, and will cost $150 if purchased on site. There will, however, be one 23 metre-high figure of Avalokishwara, the compassionate Bodhisattwa, which will be carved out in 49 parts' Shenoy has already crated 75 completed fragments to Japan and the remaining pieces are expected to be shipped by mid-May. The south Indian sculptor had started his career in 1920 as a schoolteacher, and was later drawn to stone-carving.

Statue of Avalokishwara

COURTESY ASIAWEEK

Bokaro Steel breaks records

NIKHIL BHATTACHARYA



Bokaro Steel Plant

Bokaro Steel Plant has started 1980-81 with a bang: all its major production shops have broken records in April Production of ingot steel reached 145,047 tonnes, of hot rolled coils 115,415 tonnes, of hot rolled plate sheets and slit coils 38,799 tonnes, of cold rolled coils 25,842 tonnes, of cold rolled sheets 12,253 tonnes, and sinter 257,713 tonnes Total saleable steel produced in April was 111,164 tonnes

Now, oil from Nagaland

Commercial oil has for the first time been produced from the Champang oilfields in Dhansiri valley, Nagaland Oil extraction in the Dhansiri and Borholla oilfields began on 15 March as part of ONGC's eastern region silver jubilee celebrations. The achievement has put Nagaland on the oil map of India Formerly, the Assam Oil Company had drilled a number of Nagaland foothill areas, but with no success.

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KHAAS BAAT

Vinod Khanna

DURGAPRASAD

DURGAPRASAD

Arati Gupta: loves all the chats about herself

V*ijayeta* of *Love Story* fame is acting almost as dumb as her sister *Sulakshana*. Sulakshana tried to make it big as a singing star and ended with a broken heart because apparently *Sanjeev Kumar* had proposed to her and then backed out. Now kid sister wants to become a singing star too. We only hope that she is not taking her friendship with Gaurav too seriously. For in case the friendship wanes, we will have another singing star crying on other people's shoulders.

Now that *Gaurav* has started his career with a bang with the smashing hit film *Love Story*, *Rajender Kumar* is surely feeling very smug and satisfied about his son's future. But looking at the young star driving around in his brand new imported limousine, the *(Raj) Kapoor* family is probably feeling the pangs and regretting having broken off the engagement of *Rima* with Gaurav.

Gaurav: well on top

U P SINGH

Rakhee: a formidable competitor

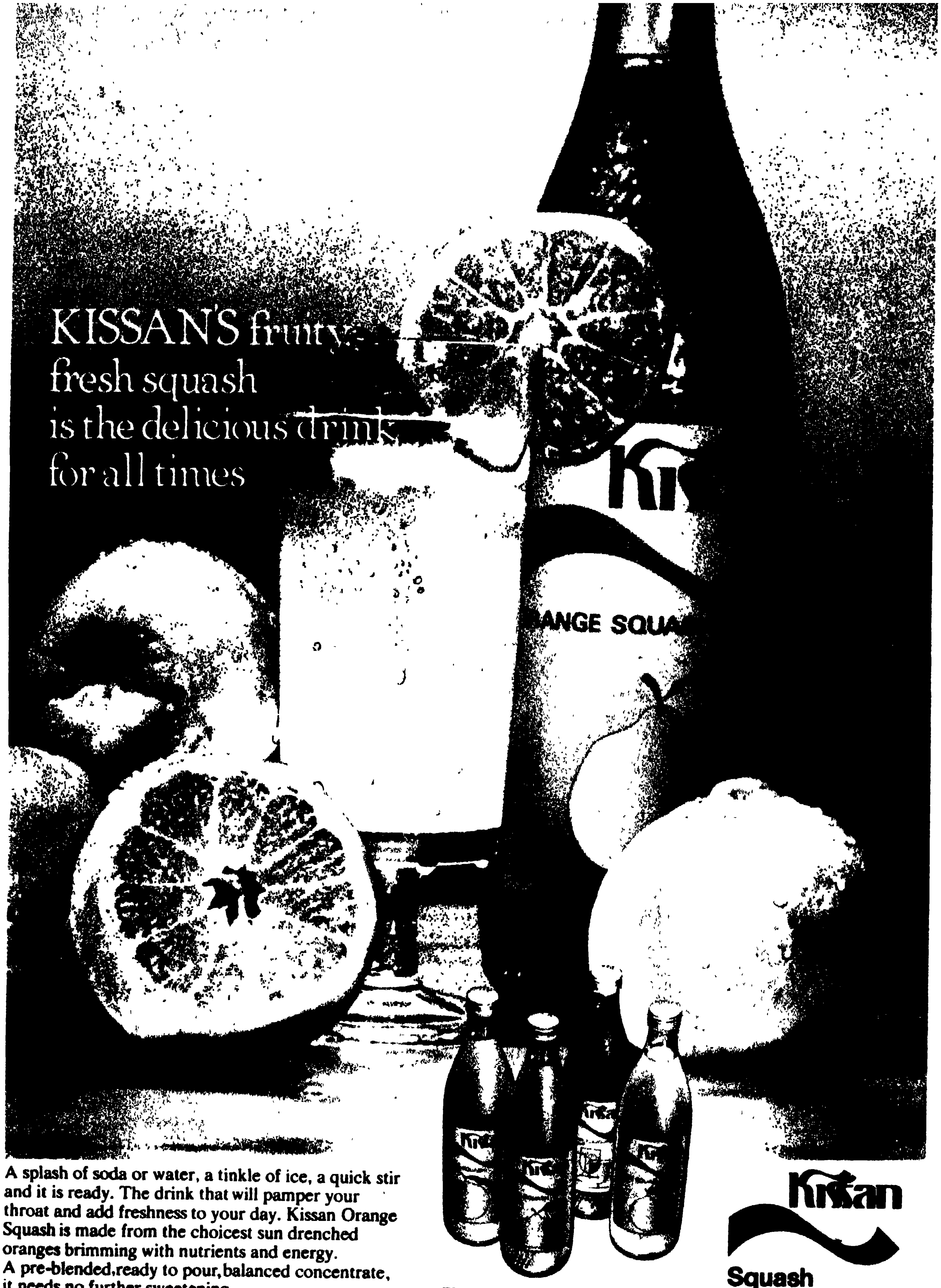
And who is walking seven feet tall these days? *Rekha*, of course, after winning the best actress award. For those who had written her off as a fickle-minded girl who is after fun and men, the award came as a big surprise. But there are still some people who feel that the award is no big deal, for Rekha had no competition. "Wait till this year," they say, "when Rekha will have to compete with *Jaya* in *Silsila* and *Rakhee* in *Bassera*, and then she can prove her merit."

Jaya: still a superior star

TARUN CHAKRAVARTY

The *Khanna* family is going to split. *Vinod Khanna* seems to have had enough of wife *Geetanjali* and has walked out of his home with a few necessary belongings. And what does the actor plan to do now? By the look of thing, he is probably going to get hitched to *Smita Patil* and/or get attached to *Rajneesh*. Whether or not that means he might inevitably get married to Smita is, of course, a different question. Besides, who believes in marriage these days, anyway?

A*rati Gupta* is making full use of gossip columnists. As the actress herself put it: it gives her a crazy kick to be spoken about and mentioned all over. So the girl keeps chatting in her loudest voice about men: which man she is particularly fond of and which man she wants to fall in love with. Of course, she sounds like *Zeenat*—but let no one point it out to her or one is in for trouble. Incidentally, this is the same girl who chopped off her naturally long eyelashes because they were getting in her way!



A splash of soda or water, a tinkle of ice, a quick stir and it is ready. The drink that will pamper your throat and add freshness to your day. Kissan Orange Squash is made from the choicest sun drenched oranges brimming with nutrients and energy.
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KHAAS BAAT

Rajinikant was then an upcoming actor and starred in a couple of movies with *Sivaji Ganesan*, then a big name in the industry. And then the inevitable happened. Rajnikant began to draw a great deal of attention, as a result of which differences arose between the two actors. Soon the differences became so obvious, that producers ceased to cast the two together. But some changes seem to have come about since then. In the proposed Tamil version of *Sholay*, not only will the two stars be together, but *Kamalahasan* too, will be playing an important role. This is interesting in view of the fact that Rajnikant and Kamalahasan have not been seen in each others company for a long time. And who is responsible for this reunion? Actor-producer *Balajee*, of course. Balajee has already remade 11 Hindi hits into Tamil films. At the moment he is working on the Tamil version of *Haath Ki Safai*, starring Kamalahasan and *Sripriya*. Before beginning work on *Sholay*, he is planning to take up another Hindi hit in which he will cast Sivaji and Kamalahasan. And how does he manage to bring all the three top names in the industry together? "It is very simple," says the actor-producer, "When I offer them roles, I do it in a friendly capacity: they just can't refuse my friendship."

What became of Bharatanatyam, the sole secret behind *Madhavi's* presentable waistline? Nowadays, the actress is seen jogging, at least a couple of days each week, on Marina beach. It is probably her heavy schedule that is leaving her no time at all for dancing. Hence the jogging, which incidentally is by far the easier of the two.

Sripriya: in demand for remakes of Hindi hits

Rathi Devi: some deadly exposures

K. R. Vijaya is no longer the number one she used to be on the Tamil screen, especially in the films produced by her industrialist husband, *Velayudhan*. The production company decided to fold up following a number of flops. There are rumours that Velayudhan's business has suffered from a series of setbacks. Vijaya, of course, is still in circulation and was seen recently in the much acclaimed Telugu film *Thyagavya*.

M. S. Viswanathan, the well-known music composer who is doubling as a producer seems to be an incorrigible optimist. Last year, his *Mangala Vadhyam* vanished after a three-week-long run, despite the fact that *Kamalahasan* and *Sripriya* were in it. Undaunted, M. S. Viswanathan forged ahead with the remake of *Muqqadar Ka Sikander*, with *Sivaji Ganesan*, Sripriya and *Madhavi*. The film, *Amara Kaviyam*, crashed on the very opening day and is dragging its feet into the third week But unlike *Hemant Kumar*, who quit filmmaking after four flops, M S. Viswanathan carries on, and has been rewarded adequately too his *Kalthoon* is doing excellent business with Sivaji and *K. R. Vijaya* who have done a good job indeed in the film.

Sarada, winner of the Urvashi award, had been sulking for quite some time primarily because she was being neglected by the film industry. Things look brighter for her now. The star is going to play the lead role in a Malayalam film that is to be made by *Adoor Gopalakrishna* The English title of the film will be *Rat Trap* and it will narrate how the inaction of a brother ruins an entire family.

PIOUSJI

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THE WORLD

Reviving an old war

Prime Minister Begin

In the recent war between Israel and West Germany there were no exchanges of missiles or mortars; words sufficed. Clearly, Israeli Prime Minister Begin was the aggressor. Granted that he lost his parents in Poland in Hitler's holocaust, but did he have any business to mount a highly personal attack on West German Chancellor Schmidt? Mr Begin was upset by the softening of the German attitude towards Arabs; so, addressing a political rally, he declared: "It is sheer arrogance and impudence to tell members of my generation...that Germany has a debt to the Arabs." He accused the Germans of wanting to "forget their unforgiveable crimes," and then shifted his attack to Mr Schmidt who, he claimed, would not care if Israel ceased to exist: "He saw this almost happen to our people in Europe not so long ago. He served in the armies that encircled the cities until the work was finished by the Nazi *einsatzgruppen* (extermination units)."

Chancellor Schmidt

Predictably, the Germans reacted strongly to this allegation. Chief government spokesman Becker replied: "Such remarks may be regarded in the context of his (Begin's) election campaign, but even an election campaign does not justify such an excess. (The Chancellor) deeply regrets these remarks and is not prepared to accept the accusation." And soon, all the main West German political parties had joined hands in condemning Mr Begin But Chancellor Schmidt himself said nothing in his defence, possibly because his war record is not exactly above board· he was a member of the Hitler Youth before being drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1937. He was subsequently conferred the Third Reich's highest military honour, the Iron Cross.

Giscard's defeat: good news

Jean-Bedel Bokassa

Deposed emperor of the Central Africa Empire Jean-Bedel Bokassa (now in exile in Ivory Coast) was perhaps the happiest man in the world after one-time friend Giscard d'Estaing lost the elections for the French presidency. Only a few days earlier, *Washington Post* had carried an interview with Mr Bokassa in which he made every effort to discredit Mr Giscard d'Estaing: by confirming that he had gifted many more diamonds to the French President than the number he disclosed after the news leaked out. Bokassa stressed that he had agreed to grant *Washington Post* the interview with the sole purpose of damaging the French President's prospects for re-election.

Curves of glory

Karen Sang (22) of Sydney had all the vital inches to win the Australian Beauty Pageant in Perth recently: her prize included an automobile and a $1,000 wardrobe. And now with her five feet eight inches of sheer loveliness, she is off to New York to represent Australia in the Miss Universe Pageant.

Briefly

Male birth pill

Doctors of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in Scotland suspect that they have accidentally discovered a male contraceptive pill while testing a new anti-migraine drug on guineapigs. The drug has shown a peculiar side-effect on the animals: they continue to have normal intercourse but no longer produce semen

The Virgin Mary cure

Calatina del Toro Lopez, a Spanish mother of two who had been dumb for the last six and a half years, let out a scream when a picture of the Virgin Mary, hanging above her bed, fell on her head. And since then her voice has been restored.

From god to sex

Former Roman Catholic priest John Bauer (44) of Bozeman, Montana (USA), has decided to open a sex shop where, he claims, he will sell "everything to make people's sex lives better." Mr Bauer had left priesthood for a teaching career but has now found a new mission in life: to "enhance people's social functioning by selling sexually explicit materials."

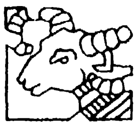
Reagan threatened

Bobby Dean Wilson (26) serving a jail sentence for armed burglary in Orlando, Florida (USA), had his term extended by five years for writing a blood-stained letter to President Reagan. In the three-page letter which was intercepted by jail officials before it could be mailed, Wilson promised to "put a third eye" in the President's head "even if it takes 15 years to do it." Wilson claims to be a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

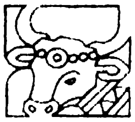
Israel has 27 A bombs

Egyptian foreign minister Kamal Hassan in a recent interview on US ABC television network claimed that Israel has 27 atom bombs stocked in its armoury

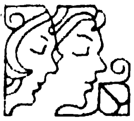
Beginning 31 May



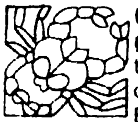
ARIES (15 April—14 May) The last two days of this week have financial gains in store for you However most of your activities will come to a standstill on account of your indifferent health Benefit through an unexpected event is indicated The time is favourable for renewing old contacts and making amends for past errors You are advised to conserve both your energies and resources Do not be extravagant Look after your health and avoid confiding in too many people **Good dates.** 31 3 and 6 **Lucky numbers.** 2, 4 and 8 **Favourable direction** South



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) You will move on the right track this week thanks by and large to your resourcefulness and contacts at the right places However, the time is not particularly favourable for taking undue risks, for gambling and speculation The time is good for sportsmen and children However, matters related to the heart will continue to cause anxiety You are advised to be rational while taking important decisions **Good dates:** 1, 3 and 5 **Lucky numbers.** 2, 3 and 5 **Favourable direction:** North



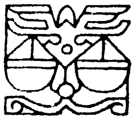
GEMINI (15 June—14 July) You will not keep good health this week However, you will find yourself in a position to repay most of your debts Womenfolk will render you help Letters will bring good tidings and possibly one of them may also carry vital information in connection with your career Your plans might be opposed by an elderly family member You are best advised to keep cool and avoid direct confrontations The time is not ripe for major changes. **Good dates:** 31, 1 and 6 **Lucky numbers:** 3, 8 and 9 **Favourable direction:** East



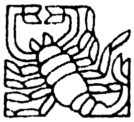
CANCER (15 July—14 August) You might be frustrated this week, primarily on account of your failures But someone will come to your rescue Your domestic front will be the source of both happiness and inspiration The time is particularly favourable for love affairs Financially you will feel secure Elders may prove very demanding. You will get the opportunity to meet important people who may eventually contribute to your success **Good dates:** 2, 4 and 6 **Lucky numbers.** 2, 5 and 7 **Favourable direction** West

LEO (15 August—14 September) You will be confronted with innumerable problems on both your domestic and professional fronts this week However the weekend has a number of pleasant surprises in store for you Do not lose heart concentrate on your plans You can safely rely on your intuitions to guide you The time is particularly favourable for those who are unemployed job opportunities will come their way You are advised to push your affairs and to guard against deceit **Good dates** 4 5 and 6 **Lucky numbers** 3 7 and 9 **Favourable direction** East

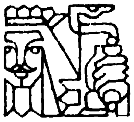
VIRGO (15 September—14 October) You may have to undertake an important journey this week Personal happiness will depend, by and large, on your ability to overcome temptations and greed The time is not favourable for competing against others Your health and family members will continue to worry you However, a number of opportunities will come your way You are advised to take full advantage of these **Good dates** 31 1 and 3 **Lucky numbers:** 3 6 and 9 **Favourable direction:** North-west



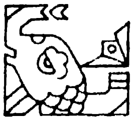
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Your financial problems, if not necessarily solved this week, will at least cease to bother you Those engaged in business will have a hectic time, but results will not be exactly commensurate with their efforts Disputes and controversies are best avoided this week Gambling and speculation should also be left for a later time You are further advised to take care in your relationship with your elders and superiors **Good dates** 2 4 and 6 **Lucky numbers** 1, 5 and 7 **Favourable direction:** South-west



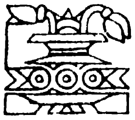
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) You will be called upon to shoulder increased responsibility this week Problems will come your way but given your gumption and initiative you will be in a position to solve most of them Your health and family matters will continue to bother you Your subordinates will prove extremely helpful. You are likely to undertake a journey. You are advised to seek and act upon the advice of elders and to push your affairs **Good dates** 3, 4 and 6 **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 6 **Favourable direction** North



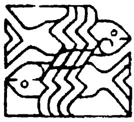
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is not a favourable week particularly for politicians Competition on your professional front will cause untold anxiety You will be deceived by a close friend or associate There are indications of a major setback You will need all your courage and determination to overcome the problems which this week has in store for you But you will be amply compensated by a happy romance and a peaceful domestic front **Good dates** 2 3 and 4 **Lucky numbers** 2 4 and 6 **Favourable direction** East



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) You will be crowned with success this week You will overcome some of your most outstanding problems Enemies will continue to work against you but without much success However, your financial problems will remain unsolved You may have to go in for fresh loans. Your domestic front is not well signified. Make plans, amends and an effort towards realising your goals **Good dates:** 31 2 and 5 **Lucky numbers.** 6 7 and 9 **Favourable direction** West



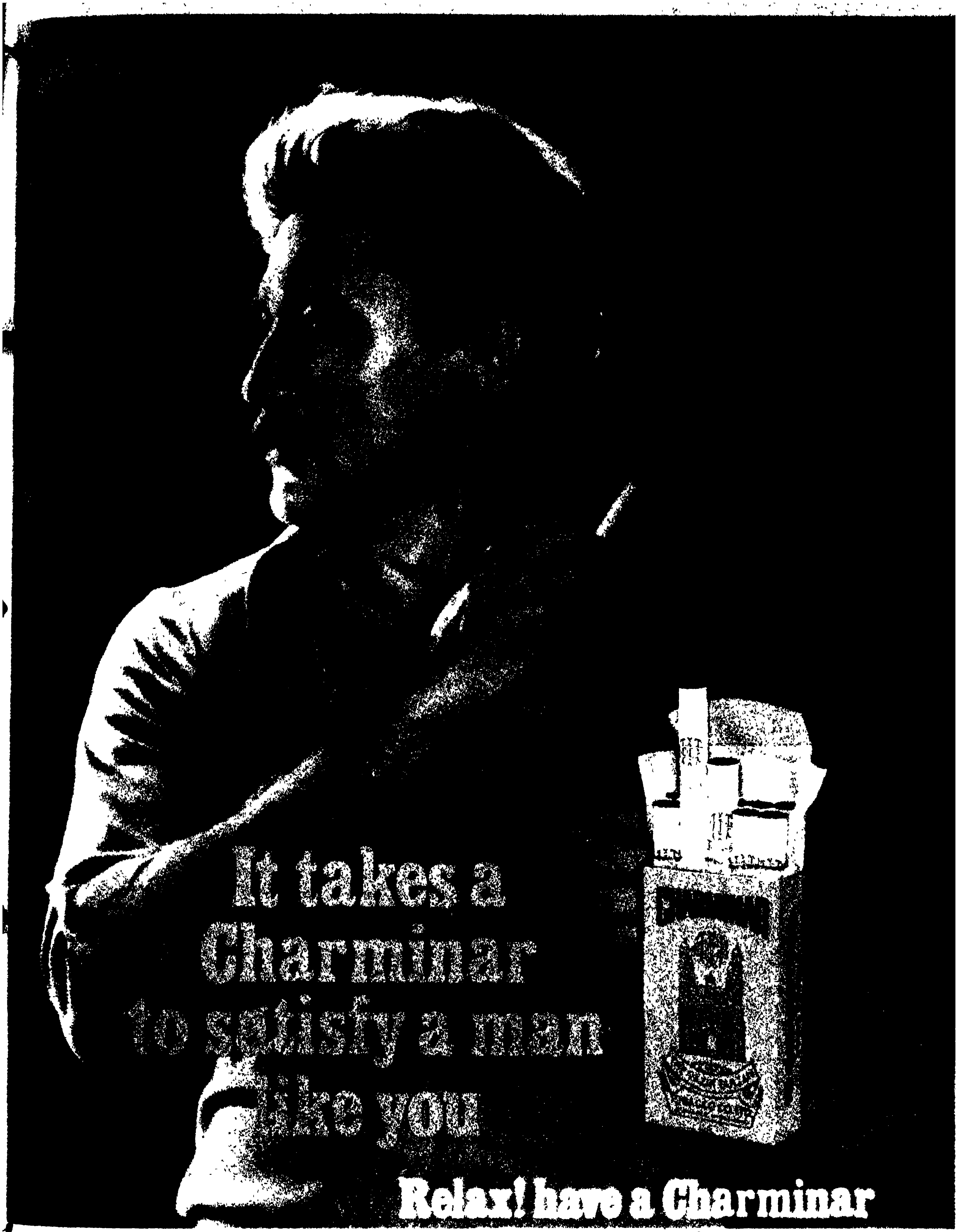
AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) You will find yourself under severe mental pressure this week Your health may suffer as a result Employers will face labour problems Businessmen will not find an outlet for their stocks You may be called upon to mediate between two rival groups However, you will emerge from the present crisis full of confidence and determination You are advised to keep up your correspondence with friends and relatives. **Good dates:** 31 2 and 6 **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 7 **Favourable direction** South



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Your current venture and efforts will not meet with success this week The time is not favourable for signing new contracts Nor are matters related to the heart well signified However, your financial condition will show a marked improvement Help in this direction will be extended to you by your friends One lucky hunch, provided you follow it to the last letter will prove very beneficial to you Look after your health **Good dates:** 1 4 and 6 **Lucky numbers:** 2 5 and 9 **Favourable direction** North

Political forecast for Mr Jagjivan Ram: He might get an important position in his own party within Ocotober 1981. However, he will have problems with the present ruling government He might have to face a jail sentence or even be fined for his past activities. He will also be troubled by some actions of his son, Mr Suresh Ram There is also a great possibility of his changing his party or even forming a new one. Mr Ram will suffer ill-health throughout the year.

AMRITLAL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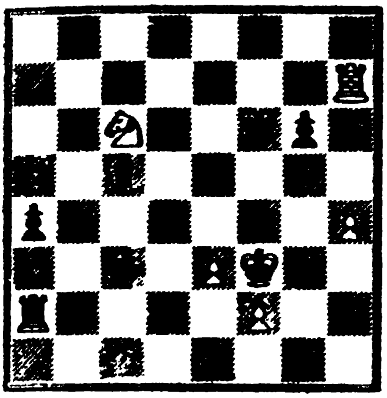
VARIETY

chess

Karpov (Black)



Ribli (White) to move
Position after Black's 39th move

Game of the month

Last week I talked about Karpov's victory in the IBM tournament. It is perhaps also to his credit that his only loss was perhaps the best played game of the tournament. On playing through the game you may be amazed that anyone can lose such an obviously drawn ending, but on closer examination it becomes clear that Black was experiencing real difficulties throughout and it is not so apparent how his play could have been improved. Logically he must have had a draw somewhere but to identify precisely how and when is no easy task. A wonderful illustration of how technical play of razor-sharp accuracy can create something from nothing, even against the World Champion.

White: Z. Ribli (Hungary). Black: A. Karpov (USSR)
Catalan Opening
1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—K3; 3. P—KN3, P—Q4; 4. B—N2, B—K2; 5. N—KB3, O—O; 6. O—O, P x P. Karpov prepared this defence to the Catalan specially for the last world championship match in Baguio. Until this game he had never lost using this system.
7. Q—B2, P—QR3; 8. Q x P, P—QN4; 9. Q—B2, B—N2; 10. B—B4, N—Q4; 11. N—B3, N x B; 12. P x N, N—Q2; 13. KR—Q1, Q—B1; 14. N—K4, P—QB4; Classically this freeing move ought to guarantee Black complete equality, yet he is left with small almost imperceptible difficulties.
15. P x P, N x P; 16. N x N, Q x N; 17. Q x Q, B x Q; 18. QR—B1, KR—B1; 19. N—K5, B x B; 20. K x B, P—B3; Very natural, Karpov probably played it almost without thinking, yet after this move Black has real problems. Perhaps more accurate was 20 . . . K—B1 and 21 . . . K—K1 leaving the knight alone for the moment.
21. N—Q3, B—B1; 22. P—K3, P—N3; Black's problem is that he cannot bring his king into the centre without allowing White to the seventh rank e.g. 22 . . . K—B2; 23. R—Q7+ K—K1; 24. R(1)—B7.
23. P—N3, B—N5; 24. P—KR4, K—B1; 25. N—Q4, K—B2; 26. P—QR4! P x P; 27. P x P, B—B4; 28. R—B4, B—Q3; 29. R x R, R x R; 30. R—QN1! At last manoeuvring an entry. If 30. . . R—B2 then 31. R—N8, B—B4; 32. R—KR8, K—N2; 33. N x P+ so Black is obliged to imbalance the position.
30. . . B—B4; 31. R—N7+ B—K2; 32. R—R7, P—K4; Of course not 32. . . R x P; 33. N—B4.
33. P x P, P x P; 34. N—B3, R x RP; 35. N x P+ K—B3; 36. N—B4, B—B4; 37. R x P
So White has won a pawn, but the win is still very far away. Black's passed QRP could become very strong.
37. ... R—R7; 38. K—B3, P—R4; 39. P—R4!
39. . . P—R5.

DIAGRAM

40. K—K4! A brilliant finesse enabling him to bring his king into the game. For if 40 . . R x P 41. N—Q5!! with a mating net woven out of nothing.
40. B—B1; 41. R—R7, B—Q3; 42. P—B4, R—R7; 43. R—R6, K—B2; 44. N—K5+ B x N; 45. K x B, K—N2; 46. R—R7+ K—R3; 47. R x P, R x P; 48. K—B6. The win is now simple and elegant.
48. . . R—R4; 49. P—K4, R—R6; 50. P—K5, R—R4; 51. P—K6, R—B4+; 52. K—K7, K—N2; 53. K—Q6, R—B1; 54. R—R7+ K—B3; 55. R—Q7! Resigns. It is zugzwang. 55. . . R moves allows 56. R—B7 mate or 55. . . P—N4; 56. P x P+ K x P; 57 P—K7 and 58. R—Q8.
Beautiful play

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

PROBLEM 1 Game all, the bidding goes

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1♥	dble	No
?			

South holds
♠KJ4 ♥KJ632 ♦5 ♣K1072

If you were marking a bidding competition, how many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Pass, (b) 2♠, (c) 2NT, (d) 3♣, (e) 3♠?

Answers should take the form of, *for example*, (a) 3, (b) 5, (c) 2, (d) 4, (e) 0

PROBLEM 2 Love all, the bidding goes:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	1♣	1♥
1♠	No	2♣	No
2♥	No	2♠	No
?			

South holds:
♠98432 ♥A6 ♦AQJ4 ♣83

How many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Pass, (b) 2NT, (c) 3♣, (d) 3♦, (e) 3♠, (f) 4♠?

PROBLEM 3 Game all, the bidding goes

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1♥	dble	1♠
?			

South holds:
♠953 ♥A109852 ♦A106 ♣4

How many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Double, (b) 1NT, (c) 2♥, (d) 2NT?

PROBLEM 4 E-W vulnerable, the bidding goes:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	1♣	No
1♥	dble	2♥	4♠
?			

South holds:
♠6 ♥KJ9743 ♦1032 ♣K108

How many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Pass, (b) Double, (c) 5♣, (d) 5♥?

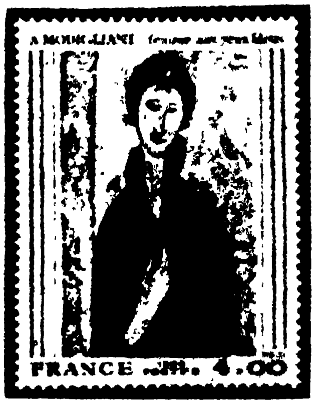
PROBLEM 5 Playing in a notrump contract, declarer has this combination:

A7
K108632

Needing five tricks, how should he tackle the suit, and why?

TERENCE REESE

stamps



Since 1961 the French Post Office have been issuing, at irregular intervals, series of large stamps featuring French works of art. The early series reproduced paintings by artists ranging from Ingres and Gericault to Chagall and Toulouse-Lautrec. Altogether there are now more than 60 designs in this format. The latest addition to the series is a 4-francs stamp (above) reproducing 'Femme au Yeux Bleus' by Modigliani

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. He wrote ten symphonies that were vast in terms of length and variety, but his music is best approached through his songs, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (1884) and *Kindertotenlieder* (1901-1904). Who was the composer?
2. In 1936, an English economist, John Maynard Keynes, wrote a book which is commonly referred to as the *General Theory*. What is the complete name of the book?
3. What are the six major systems of Indian philosophy?
4. What would you be studying if you are a student of Ufology?
5. Its chemical name is beryl—beryllium aluminium silicate and it gets its colouring from the presence of chromium oxide. What is it commonly known as?

ANSWERS

1 Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), the Austrian Jewish composer, one of the most important figures in 20th century music
2 *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money.*
3 *Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta and Mimamsa*
4 UFOs Ufology refers to a cultish interest in the study of strange and unexplained aerial phenomena
5 Emerald

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and knows his true worth
is the man
most likely to succeed

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prize is 30 for the entry given first

AHMEDABAD A wayside restaurant on the national highway at Kaira was lucky to receive a distinguished customer, the chief minister of Gujarat, Mr Madhavsinh Solanki yesterday (25 April). On his way back from Baroda to the city Mr Solanki landed at the restaurant for a quick lunch as he had to go without food till late afternoon. After his return from Delhi Mr Solanki left directly for Baroda to lay the foundation for the sodium cyanide project of Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Limited After the function was over around 11.30 am, he was taken round the Polymer Corporation project and other projects in the Indian Petro Chemicals complex till late afternoon. While the GACL had made arrangements for lunch for other guests including a press party from Ahmedabad its authorities had given no thought for the chief minister's lunch. Mr Solanki left Baroda around 2.30 pm having almost nothing to eat till then and stopped at the wayside restaurant 45 minutes later The surprised owner of the restaurant took him inside and served him the best available snacks—*Times of India* (Anand R.Deshpande, Solapur)

NEW DELHI. Mr G M Banatwalla (Muslim League) lamented in the Lok Sabha that the government paid scant attention to the cases of communal violence. Certain officers found guilty of dereliction of duty by the Mahajan commission which had investigated the Maharashtra riots, were punished "What was the punishment awarded?" Mr Banatwalla disclosed it was Rs 10 only. How was it realised? "In 10 equal monthly instalments," the member said while participating in the debate on the Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Amendment Bill—*Hindustan Times* (Aniruddha Chowdhury, New Delhi)

NEW DELHI: A thunderstorm rattled the windows of the high-domed Rajya Sabha. A window-pane was broken and a supporting wooden frame came down on the floor of the House narrowly missing a Janata member. Some Congress(U) members, occupying seats on the left of the chair shifted to safer benches. The lights also went off engulfing the House in darkness for a few seconds. Are you going to hold the Asian Games this way quipped a member then participating in half-hour discussion on the hotel projects for 1982 Asiad to be held in the capital—*Hindustan Times* (Rajesh Karnik, New Delhi)

It is suspected that some people in the health department of the West Bengal Assembly are forging appointment letters. Official sources said in Calcutta that eight such forged appointment letters had been detected so far The letters had been issued during the end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980 The irregularities were detected when the recipients of the letters went to take up their duties in the health department in different districts A few such appointees even lost their jobs after joining duty and working for over a month In one case the reply from Writers Building to a query from a district regarding one such appointment had been forged—*Statesman* (Nibedita Ghosh, Calcutta)

NEW DELHI. It was an incredible display of Yogic feats performed with amazing impeccability, something one had till now seen only in comic and scoffed at But today (7 May) a group of artistes from all over the country exhilarated an audience by walking on a bed of nails chewing razor blades playing music through the neck lifting needles with eyelids and climbing a ladder with rungs of swords at the Strange and Unbelievable Miracle Performers' Centre Prof M Lal from [illegible] meditated [illegible] on a bed of nails, walked wearing wooden sandals with nails protruding out of them then lay down on the bed on his stomach with two teenage lads astride his back. Finally he lay on his back on the bed and a man broke a brick on his stomach with a hammer There was not a scratch on his body He climbed a ladder whose rungs consisted of sharp edged swords, which were inspected by members of the audience and later balanced himself on his stomach on a sword edge Dr Ashoka Indra of Madhya Pradesh chewed razor blades and then put a four inch nail up his nose The strain was evident from the tears that rolled down his cheeks Mr K. N Sharma used his eyelids to lift a bucket half full of water Miss Santara, accoutred in a colourful Rajasthani dress, bent over backwards with delectable suppleness and meticulously lifted two sharp needles with her eyes Chand Pasha played a Hindi film song with a trumpet by blowing it from his neck instead of mouth Ravi Anand licked a red hot iron rod. Miss Puna Nath bent iron rods with a sharp-edged crescent shaped instrument pressed against her neck. Adding a touch of inimitable humour was the ventriloquist, Pat Kaye "Why didn't God create eve first? Because He did not want advice!"—*Times of India* (Ashok Gupta, Calcutta)

without comment

There is need for infusing a new style of functioning in the Congress(I) organisation—Rajiv Gandhi on why he has decided to join politics

We were all anxious that the continuity of the Nehru family in the nation's politics should be maintained We are very happy—Rajendra Kumari Bajpayee, Congress(I) general secretary on Rajiv Gandhi's decision to enter into politics

The Indian people regard certain families with reverence and affection and of their own free will continue to support them—Khushwant Singh in *Hindustan Times*

While Sanjay Gandhi operated on patients without chloroform, his brother never fails to use anaesthetic—Sunanda K Dutta-Ray in *Statesman*

If Mrs Gandhi wants to use enquiry commissions as a political weapon, she could have appointed hundreds of commissions against the previous Janata government—G P. Moopanar, Congress(I) general secretary

These pressmen coming from Hindusthan should be thrown to the vultures—G M Shah, son-in-law of Sheikh Abdullah quoted in *Organiser*

Some people took you for communists, then for opportunists when Janata came to power, and now they take you for zig-zag opportunists not knowing where you will turn and for how long—Zail Singh, union home minister to Samar Mukherjee, CPI(M) leader

If you do not have suitable people in your party, we will loan some from the opposition—A. B. Vajpayee, BJP leader on the ruling party's inability to complete the union cabinet

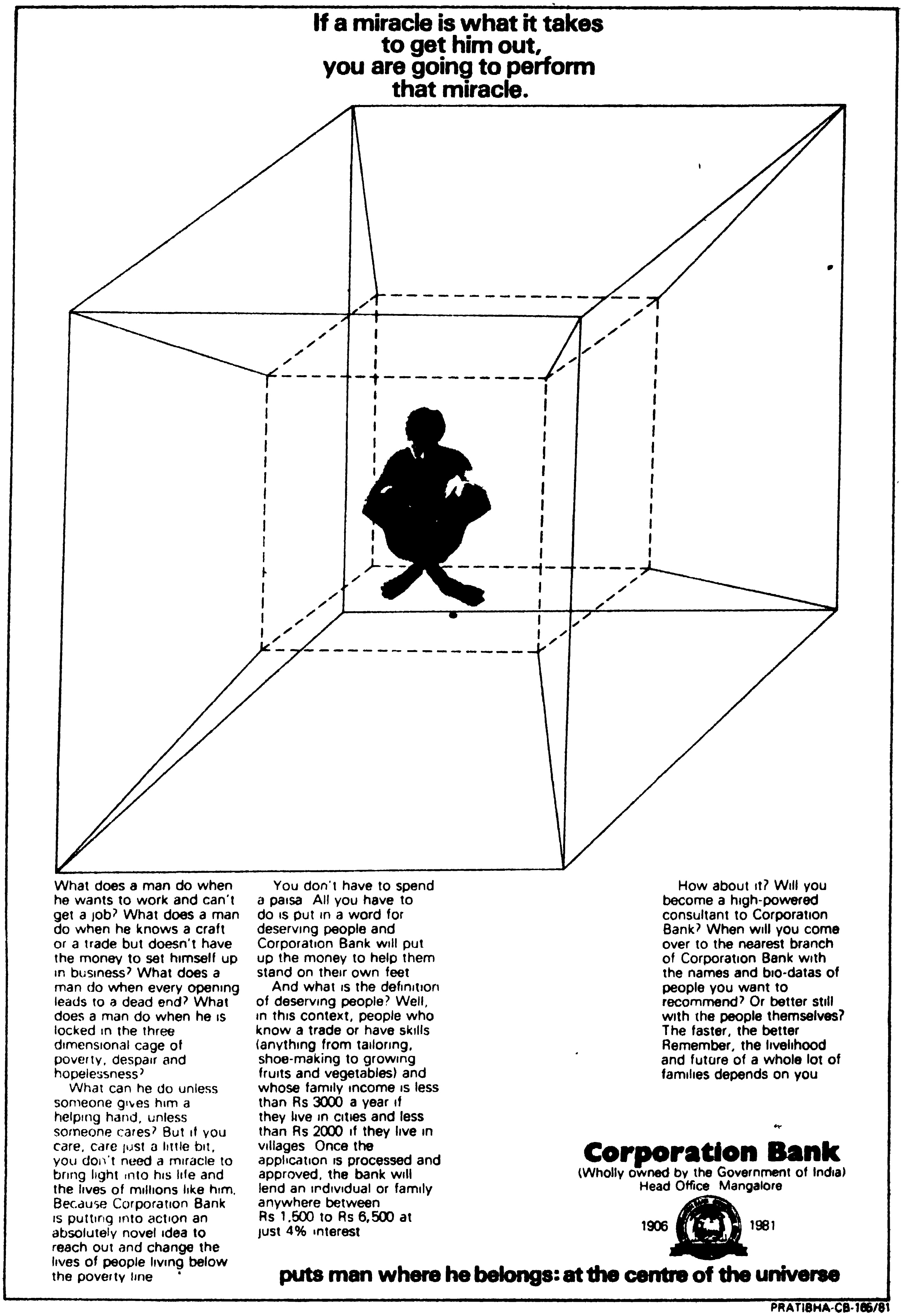
When you keep on taking it (alcohol) after a certain age you feel as if someone's driving iron rods into your liver—Ram Jethmalani, BJP vice president on his decision to give up alcohol, quoted in *Blitz*

The major danger is that without anybody wanting it, there may suddenly be a war—Mrs Gandhi

All India Communist Party does not have as many members as the alphabets on its letter pad—Rajeswar Rao, CPI general secretary

(The French middle class) are radical in everything except their politics. They fear change—Girilal Jain in *Times of India*

I hope President Reagan can keep my children in America and take care of their education The Americans are excellent cooks, you know—Idi Amin



If a miracle is what it takes to get him out, you are going to perform that miracle.

What does a man do when he wants to work and can't get a job? What does a man do when he knows a craft or a trade but doesn't have the money to set himself up in business? What does a man do when every opening leads to a dead end? What does a man do when he is locked in the three dimensional cage of poverty, despair and hopelessness?

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ASIDE

Sabotage in the milk bottle

By V. K. Madhavan Kutty

I was happy at the timely detection of the sabotage attempt. One detection in time saves nine as they said. Had it gone unnoticed, imagine the calamity it would have brought to the country.

"A lizard in the milk bottle in Delhi" read a news item headline. When I saw the news item in the morning paper I was really taken aback. I rushed to the press without wasting time and made a statement interrupting the copies being subbed there. "A serious attempt at sabotage has been detected in time No words are sufficient to condemn this dastardly act."

I ordered a probe immediately and rushed to the milk depot from where the milk bottle was sold. I ordered cordoning of the milk depot for a complete investigation.

"It was a routine check for insects in the milk that revealed the presence of the lizard. If it was not detected, the lizard would have reached *elsewhere*," the man in the depot told me. I cannot wait for routine procedures to take action on such an important matter that could have affected the entire nation Therefore, I dismissed the chairman, manager and dairy engineer of the milk scheme immediately.

Later, I also dismissed that milk depot man and others who were hanging around the milk depot. Some people couldn't be dismissed because they were just hangers-on. The department ordered a search and prosecution of all the people connected with the crime.

"Do you have any conclusive evidence?" the reporter asked me.

"Of course, the lizard was subjected to detailed examination. And we have valuable clues," I said.

Raising his eyebrows, the reporter asked again, "Are these clues sufficient enough to support the sabotage theory?"

"It is not theory, it is practice. Apart from that, the investigating authorities have said that there was 'foreign matter' in the milk," I pointed out.

"So?" the reporter queried again.

"So what! The presence of a foreign matter is proof of foreign hand behind this conspiracy," I tried to educate him.

"Do you mean to say..." the reporter continued.

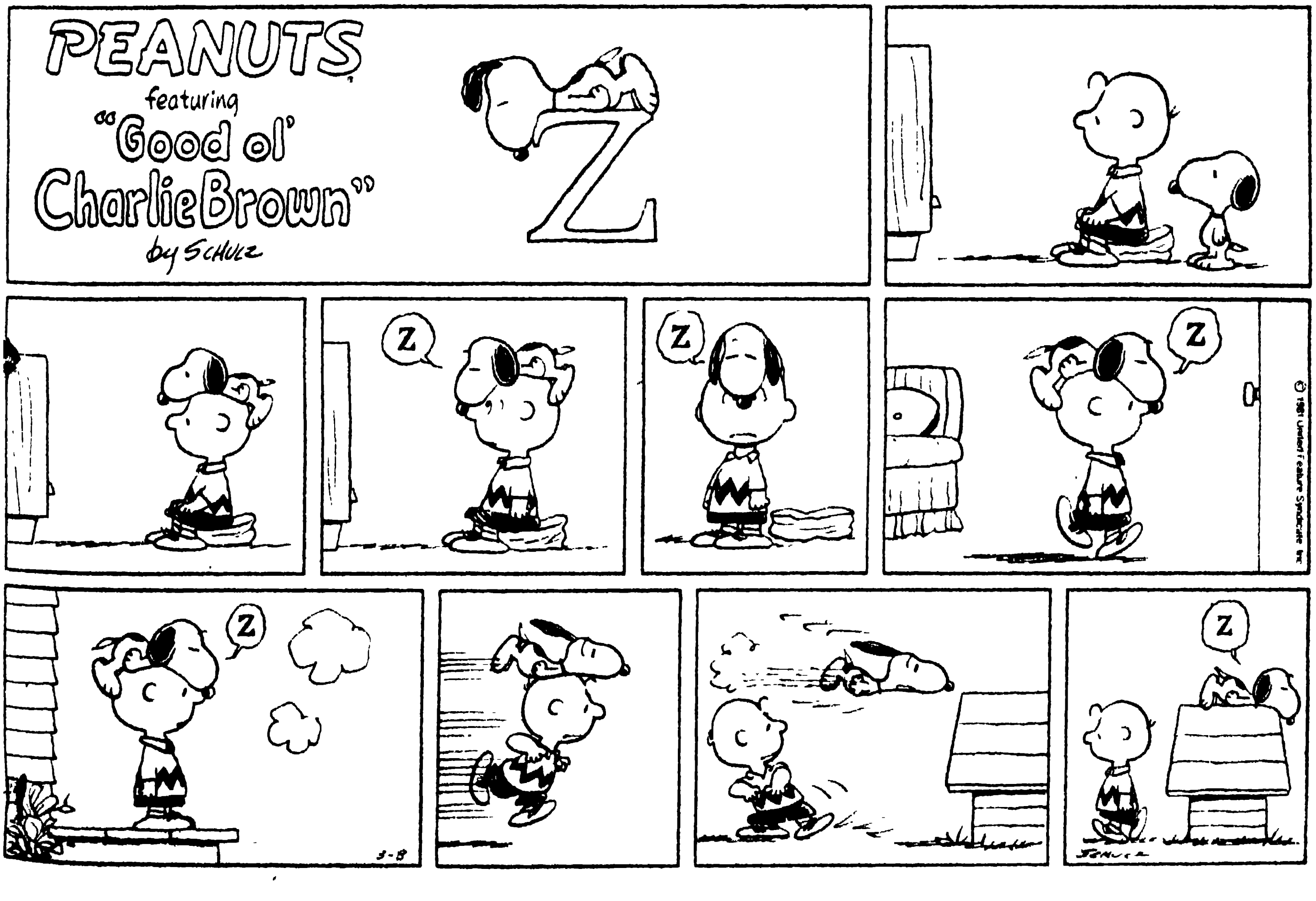
I interrupted, "The lizard had a Latin American origin It can also be traced to the Chinese dragon. These matters are under investigation. I shall let you know at the appropriate time. What we did was to detect this attempt at the appropriate time."

"But the bottle was sold at some other depot. It would not have reached the target," the reporter asked me with a smile.

"Ultimately the bottle would have reached its target. In politics you cannot say anything. The bottle goes back to the depot and after sometime it would reach the target."

"Do you mean to say that those who use the milk, in the meantime, would not be affected?" the reporter asked again.

"According to our information, it was revealed during the investigations, I am told, that the lizardian effect would be transmitted to the milk only after some time. I have experts who agree with this ." I said.



ALL POWERFUL BUREAUCRATS

THE midnight transfer of Prof B Nag, secretary in the department of electronics, has been widely reported, but not how helpless a senior cabinet minister was in the matter. During lunch on the last day of the budget session of the Rajya Sabha, the minister told some reporter friends, "The cabinet appointments committee will not allow such a gross injustice to be done." But when he was informed a few hours later that the official order had been issued, he could only lamely add, "Oh, then nothing can be done." It seems that Prof Nag had actually fallen foul of a bureaucrat who was *under* him, Mr Ashok Parthasarathy, joint secretary and son of Mr G. Parthasarathy, formerly India's permanent representative at the UN. When Prof Nag had earlier refused to budge without a written order, the powers that be at the cabinet secretariat got together and had his cryptic dismissal, which did not even say where he was being transferred, issued by the establishment officer in the cabinet secretariat.

... WHO NEEDS ENEMIES ?

PANDIT Kamalapati Tripathi is in a soup. Last month Mr Tapeshwar Nath Zuthshi, a Congress (I) activist, freedom fighter and close associate of Panditji published an eight-page pamphlet in Hindi strongly advocating his candidature for the presidentship of the Congress(I). The pamphlet, *Why I want Pandit Tripathi to be the Congress(I) president*, blames the Congress(I) leadership for weakening the party by making the same person (Mrs Gandhi) both Prime Minister and party president. Mr Zuthshi also accused the leadership of hobnobbing with "foreign intelligence services" and added, "If the CIA agents remove Mrs Gandhi from power, there will be total darkness and chaos in the country. In such a situation the party presidentship should be in the hands of a strong person who can save the country. And the only such strong leader in the party is Kamalapati Tripathi." Poor Panditji had to rush to Mrs Gandhi and try to explain that he had nothing to do with it. "Some people are trying to use my shoulders," he lamented. The police have raided the premises of a local press and seized the original manuscript.

AN EYE ON PATNA

RAILWAY minister Kedar Pande's supporters have started circulating the rumour that Pande*ji* will replace Mr Jagannath Mishra shortly as the chief minister of Bihar. On 4 May, just after his visit to Bihar Sharif with Mrs Gandhi, Mr Pande told one of his journalist friends, "*Ab to Bihar pai dhyan dena hoga* (Now attention will have to be paid to Bihar)." Although the communal carnage in Bihar Sharif has badly exposed the administrative impotence of the Jagannath Mishra government which was even before that not considered to be doing very well, Mrs Gandhi has so far been extremely reluctant to replace Congress(I) chief ministers. Right now it is only Mr Pande and his associates who are talking about a change of guard at Patna seriously

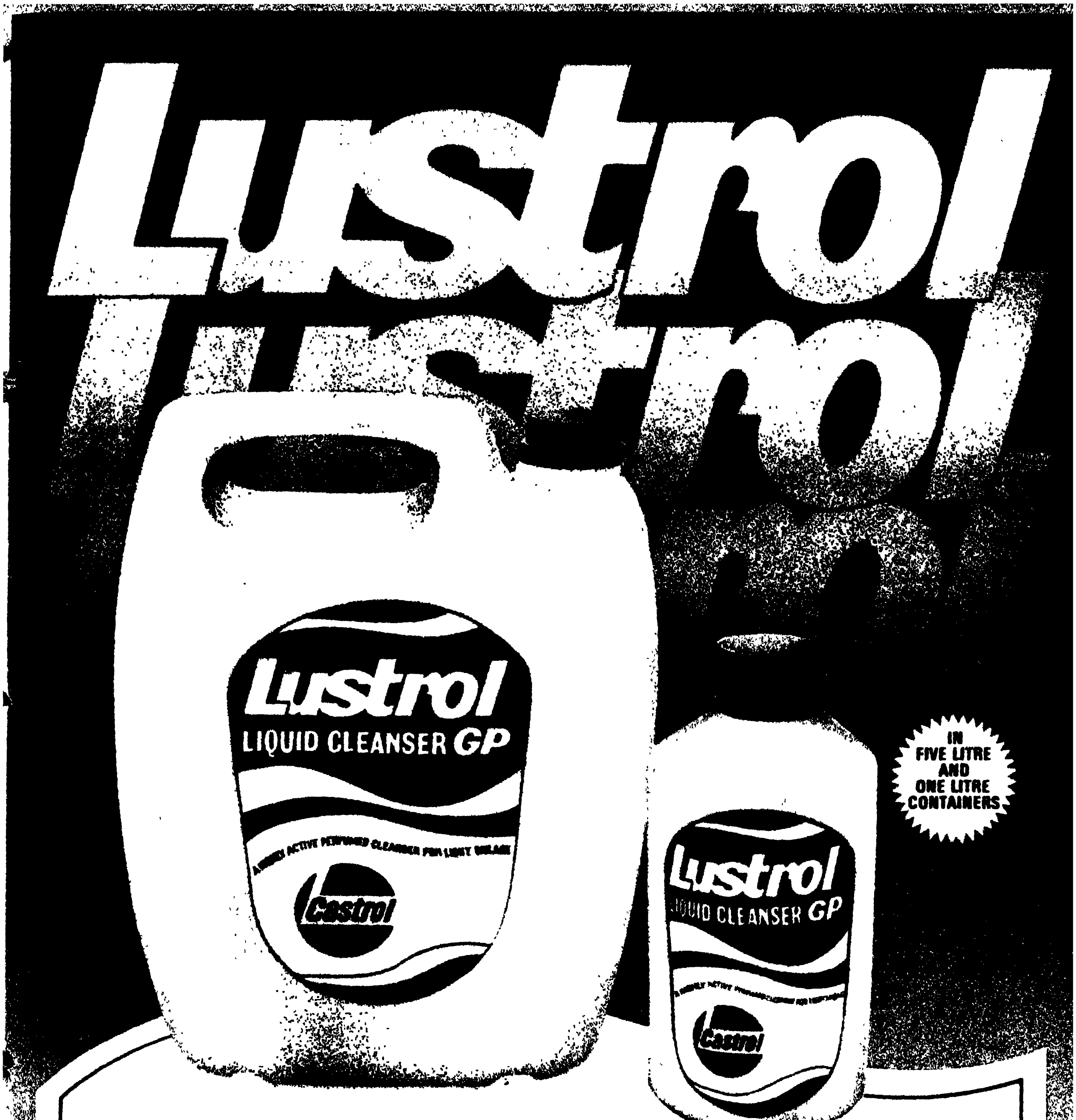
VIP SWAMY

INDIAN missions abroad may ignore an average visiting Indian even if he is in trouble but not one of the numerous *swamis* known to enjoy official patronage. Mr Chandraswamy, a *"sarkari swamy"* as such people are known, had toured West Asia in the first week of March. Guess what came to fetch him at Kuwait airport? None other than the ambassador's car. That is not all. Our *swamiji* was given the same VIP treatment at Bahrain and Dubai by our missions there.

STRICTLY LEGAL

RAJASTHAN CM Jagannath Pahadia is waging a silent war against his arch-rival, Mr Mohanlal Sukhadia, former CM of the state and a veteran Congressman. As Mr Sukhadia is now more or less a free man, he has been extensively touring the whole state. This is bad enough but what has really galled Mr Pahadia is that Mr Sukhadia has been drawing huge crowds. So Mr Pahadia has issued instructions to his cabinet colleagues and passed the word on to the DMs and SPs not to attend any of the meetings organised by Mr Sukhadia's supporters. The officials' predicament can be gauged from what one police officer said: *"Meeting arrange karane to ham log nahin jaate par law and order ke liye jana padta hai. Kya karrain* (We don't go there to arrange meetings but we have to go to maintain law and order. What can we do)?"

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN



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ACILAMBA 37/86

SUNDAY VOLUME 8
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May 31, 1981

By announcing his candidature for the Amethi Parliamentary seat, Rajiv Gandhi has set at rest months of speculation and formally joined politics. M. J. Akbar followed him on the campaign trail in Amethi and spoke to him in an exclusive interview. **Page 8**

Haryana's opposition Janata Party MLA, Swami Agnivesh, has been fighting a running battle with chief minister Bhajan Lal for the rights of bonded labourers in the brick-kilns and stone quarries of the state. **Page 20**

What we need is a more equitable and scientific system of reservations that will take note of the social and economic handicaps that the backwards and the poor suffer from, says Madhu Limaye. **Page 24**

President Zia has a Moscow card up his sleeves. Rajinder Puri feels this could be the real threat to peace in the subcontinent in the near future. **Page 16**

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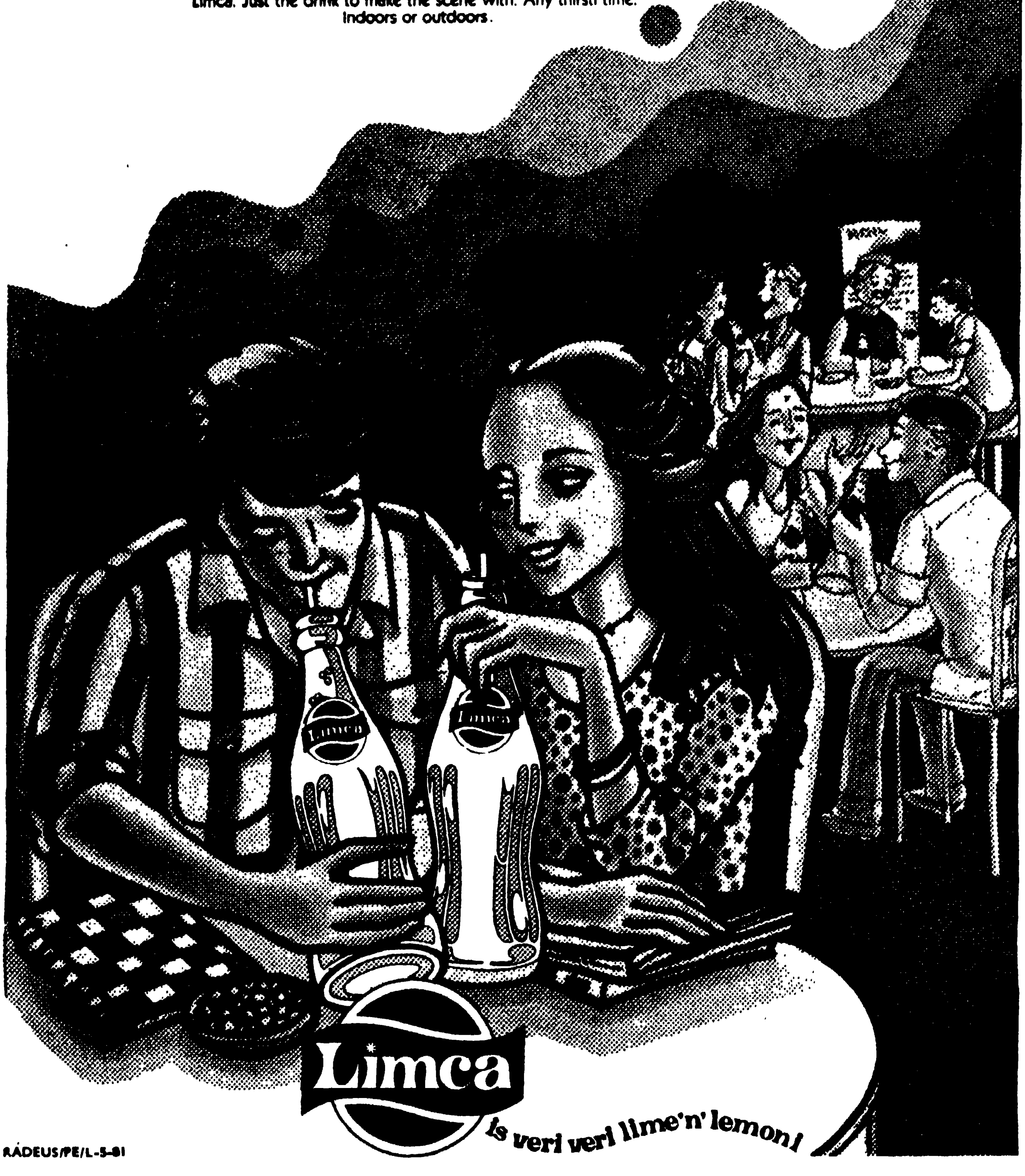
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RADEUS/PE/L-5-81

International merry-go-round

It is not only the super powers who have cards to play: many of the small powers also have some up their sleeves. Pakistan, for one. It seems to have several and might have played one, but for India stepping in to expose that card to others.

When Tass, the Soviet news agency, asserted the other day that Pakistan had recently expressed a "cautious desire" to establish contacts with Kabul but was held back by the USA and some other powers, it was referring to this game. The only thing is that there is nothing recent about it. It happened last year.

Relations between Islamabad and Washington had deteriorated to a point where Gen Zia, the Pakistan President, had contemptuously dismissed an aid offer of 400 million dollars as "peanuts." He had cause for dissatisfaction. A high-powered Pakistani delegation, headed by Mr Agha Shahi, foreign minister, had returned from America with the impression, after meeting President Carter and the secretary of state, that arms worth one billion dollars had been as good as delivered—and as a first instalment.

The peeved Gen Zia announced that Moscow and Islamabad were going to have talks. "We want to acquire harmony and understanding with our neighbour, the Soviet Union," he said. Islamabad established contacts with Moscow. Russia wanted an undertaking about the 'security' of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (that is, the rebels would not be allowed to operate from Pakistani territory) and expressed its willingness to pay Pakistan the price in terms of military and economic aid. It was decided between the two countries that Mr Agha Shahi would visit Moscow to finalise the deal. It was a very secret project; neither America nor China knew anything about it. Significantly, the Soviet Union kept India out of the picture.

But New Delhi chanced to get the information regarding the proposed Pakistan-Soviet talks. It wasted no time in passing on the intelligence report to Washington and Peking. Both America and China at first did not believe it, but later got confirmation from their own intelligence sources. They made this an issue with Islamabad and forced Mr Agha Shahi to cancel his visit to Moscow. He sent, in his place, Pakistan's foreign secretary, Mr Pracha, who was once Pakistan's envoy in Kabul. That was in July. Mr Pracha did not pursue Islamabad's original idea.

EXCLUSIVE
EXCLUSIVE
EXCLUSIVE

BY KULDIP NAYAR

The whole thing got sidetracked. Had it not happened, Pakistan would have agreed to talk to the representatives of the Karmal government of Afghanistan somewhere outside Kabul and thus extended indirect recognition to the government. At one time, Islamabad even approached New Delhi to help it arrange a meeting between the Islamic delegation and Kabul at Geneva. However, pressure from America and China forced Pakistan to take a u-turn. And thus the limited effort at Pak-Soviet conciliation fell through.

This was not the first time Pakistan had tried to play the Russia card. In 1960 Bhutto had persuaded Ayub, then Pakistan's martial law administrator, to do it. After accepting a Soviet offer for oil prospecting, Bhutto, then minister for fuel, power and natural resources, went to Russia and signed an agreement (1961). Islamabad reportedly suggested that it was willing to come out of SEATO and CENTO provided Moscow helped Pakistan get Kashmir. But Moscow drew the line there. It said no.

Since America does not trust General Zia fully, it would not be surprising if, after the USA has poured arms into Pakistan, he faces the prospects of

A few years later, Russia gave Pakistan some arms. This caused some concern in New Delhi. First Russia denied the report but later told India that it wanted to "retrieve" Pakistan from the western camp. That was the time (1966-68) when India had developed tolerably good relations with the USA. The opposition parties moved a resolution in Parliament denouncing Russia's new policy, but the government blocked the resolution because India's dependence on Russia for arms, trade and even capital goods was heavy. It was argued that there had been no Parliament resolution to condemn the USA when it gave arms to Pakistan, and there was no reason for one when Russia gave some limited arms supply to that country.

No doubt, Gen Zia's attempt to build links with the USSR ended last August. But he did not close his options at that time. He went on sending feelers to Moscow. To prove his bonafides, Pakistan got an earlier resolution of the Islamic conference toned down, thereby making a provision for conference representatives to meet Kabul's representatives, without bothering about the fact that such a meeting would amount to talking to Afghanistan before the withdrawal of Soviet forces.

Gen Zia gave up the idea of "mending fences with Moscow" only when Mr Reagan was elected America's President. And now Gen Zia has been able to persuade Washington to give him even sophisticated armaments, including the F-16, a fighter-bomber. But Gen Zia might have to pay a price for his attempt at double-dealing. He has lost credibility with Washington. Since America does not trust him fully, it would not be surprising if, after the USA has poured arms into Pakistan, he faces the prospects of elimination.

Since Washington has begun to nourish doubts about Gen Zia, it does not want to alienate New Delhi unnecessarily. That probably explains why Gen Alexander Haig, US secretary of state, wants to visit New Delhi. For him, as for Mr Huang Hua, the Chinese foreign minister who will also be visiting New Delhi in the end of June, India is still a card to play. The games can continue endlessly.

Vague, suicidal

The idea of a separate homeland for Sikhs, Khalistan *(Sikhs: the third nation?* 3 May), is vague and suicidal. If this demand is encouraged, the people of the north-east too may take up the cry.
Gangadhar Nayak, Rourkela

Our country is a secular democracy, where all minorities have the freedom to coexist. But such fanatical demands as for a Khalistan only pollute the atmosphere of goodwill. They are a challenge to national integrity. Of course, genuine Sikh grievances should be dealt with immediately.
Hari Hara Mishra, Bolangir

The Punjabi Sikh's memory of the glorious Sikh empire established by Maharaja Ranjit Singh is understandable. The wonderful military machine he built up, which lost to the British at Mudki, Ferozeshah, Aliwal and Sobraon, thanks to the treachery of Generals Lal Singh and Tej Singh who wanted to destroy the grand Khalsa army in the process, is a story that evokes memories of valour and patriotism of the Khalsa. So is the battle of Chilianwala in 1849, when the Sikhs almost wiped out the English cavalry under Lord Gough and captured 49 enemy cannons. But are these not the proud heritage of the whole country? In post-Independence India, the contribution of Sikhs to national defence is widely acknowledged, although it is a fact that no Sikh has yet risen to the post of chief of staff of the armed forces. This is because promotion to top military posts is governed by many reasons, including seniority. Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh and Lt Gen Jagjit Arora did rise to the top. It is a pity that the brave Sikh should be falling prey to hallucinations.
Shambhu Nath Ghosh, Asansol

Every state of India has some grievances. Should these lead to 22 different secessionist movements?
M. K. Das, Kalyani, West Bengal

Mr Khushwant Singh was the right person to interview on the subject (*"Every evening the prayer ends with 'Raj karega khalsa',"* 3 May). I agree with him that like the Assamese demand, the Sikh demand for a separate homeland is suicidal, and the work of irresponsible mischief-makers. It is true that Punjab has made rapid strides since Independence, but it still has a long way to go. As a Sikh settled outside Punjab for many years, I am convinced that my community has a poor image outside its home state. Instead of being misguided by mishief-makers, Sikhs should work for a better tomorrow.
Surender Singh, Purnea, Bihar

Farmers, fight

Death at Nipani (26 April) reveals the oppressive character of the state machinery, which is denying farmers a share of the cake they produce. It is a pity that the government is not bothered about the problem; the manner in which politicians repeatedly contradict themselves when they declare that this country belongs to the farmers is shameful. The present social set-up proves that this country belongs to the rich. The farmers' struggle must be strengthened.
Chougule Abdul Lateef, Bombay

The government comes to power through the ballot, but stays in power with bullets.
Hari Hara Mishra, Bolangir, Orissa

In the past farmers were exploited by local *zamindars*; today they are exploited by businessmen who control the administration and finance political parties' poll campaigns.
Dolon Bhattacharjee, Murshidabad, West Bengal

Calcutta, too

Shobha Kilachand's *Tarla's story* (3 May) is true not only of middle-class career wives in Bombay but Calcutta, too. It is time career wives stood up to resist such torture in the name of "duties towards in-laws."
Rina Sen Gupta, Calcutta

I am sure there are many Tarlas in our country. But, at the same time, I strongly feel that our magazines have been presenting only one side of the picture. There are also many instances of men being put to a lot of hardship by their spouses and spouses' relatives. The wife often prevents her husband from sending money to his parents and performing his duties as a son or brother. Many people talk about male domination; why are they silent about female domination?
Rama Puram Chandru, Madras

The catch: income distribution

Subramaniam Swamy (*China and India: the two are even*, 26 April) concludes that India and China are at par with each other with a real per capita income of about $ 220. What he overlooks is the fact that the average per capita income of any country does not indicate the standards of living of the masses. It is well known that the per capita income of about 70 per cent of the total Indian population is below that average. What is more pathetic is the fact that no less than 20 per cent of the Indian population lives well below the poverty line (ie., of Rs 40 per capita per month). On the contrary, according to the famous folk singer Mr Hemanga Biswas whom I met after his second visit to China about three years ago, almost every Chinese family has at least one bicycle and radio set, if not more.
Debashish Sarkar, Calcutta

Mr Swamy criticises the Chinese in American terms—of per capita income and inflation—not in terms of the quality of life, and its improvement over the past three decades. Does China have Foras Roads where prostitutes go for Rs five in 'cages', hospitals from where patients are thrown out on the streets to die, and slums which survive on making hooch from filth? Does Mr Swamy's comparison take into account the revolution in the relations of production in China, the rational management of large cooperative farms, the spread of education and modern agricultural methods, and the social security of China's workers?
Gopal Kamat, Bombay

Waste of money

Mrs Margaret Thatcher's visit to India was aptly called *A visit of no consequence* (3 May). One wonders why, in spite of the British PM's known inflexibility, such an extravagant visit was arranged, which resulted in nothing but a heavy drain on the public exchequer. Long before Mrs Thatcher came to India, officials and ministers of both countries had started criticising the ensuing visit.
Pinaki Chakraborty, Calcutta

India's Sheikh

Will Sheikh Abdullah join Mrs Gandhi's cabinet? (18 January) proves that the Sheikh has always been misunderstood. It is true that the country needs him for social integration and communal harmony.
A. Pawar, Almora

Sabarmati Ashram replies

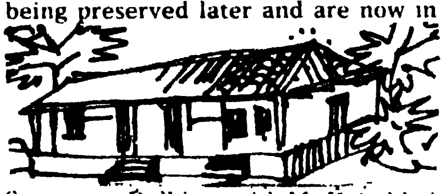
My attention was kindly drawn to the cover story about Sabarmati Ashram in SUNDAY dated 5 April 1981 (*Corruption at Sabarmati Ashram).* The documentary film in Orwo colour 'Lord of Humility' was prepared by way of a special Gandhi centenary programme, as approved by the Gujarat government, along with a special centenary calendar and a tourist diary, after obtaining rates from different parties concerned. Fortunately all these three items have won special awards for first-rate quality production. This film has been appreciated by all those who have seen it and has received a certificate of merit by the jury for Gandhi award for films and documentaries in December 1969. This jury was headed by the well-known writer-director K. A. Abbas and among its members were distinguished persons like Dr Prem Kirpal, Dr Sushila Nayar, Mr Anil K. Chanda and Mr G. Shankara Kurup. A similar award was also given to BBC's film "Gandhi's India."

The Gandhi memorial museum building has won high appreciation in the country and outside for its simple, beautiful, artistic architecture designed by Mr Charles M. Correa, architect, Bombay. Of course this portion of land in the proximity of 'Hridaya Kunj' and on the riverside was a low-lying area filled up with municipal waste and in spite of all our precautions and due care the floor has sunk after 20 years. But the repairs have already been started by us since the last two years and they will be completed this year provided the cement supply is regular.

A five-year plan for the development of Sabarmati Ashram as a national memorial was also prepared with the kind cooperation of National Institute for Design, Ahmedabad. It was approved by the central and state governments but the suggestion for a special sub-committee in place of a permanent government representative on the trust board is still pending before the government.

From a lonely spot of uneven, uncultivated waste land without a single tree in 1917, when it was selected the *ashram* has taken shape gradually; from tents it now has brick buildings. No part of it was ever in the same condition even while Gandhiji lived here. In 1930 he left for the Dandi March, and 'Hridaya Kunj' was used for residential purposes till his death.

In fact 'Hridaya Kunj' was first opened to visitors as a memorial only after 1950, with its office inside. Later in 1963 when the museum was inaugurated in its new building and I took charge, 'Hridaya Kunj' stopped being used for any other purpose and has been preserved in the same condition as it was when it came under the memorial trust in 1950. Thus relics and belongings of those days are very rare. But we still have 20,000 original manuscripts of Gandhiji's correspondence; besides the very spot where Gandhiji stayed, and the buildings, have been preserved for scholars and future generations. Many of Gandhiji's articles of daily use like his stick etc. started being preserved later and are now in Sevagram, Delhi, or with Mr Kahubhai Gandhi and among the possessions of the late Manuben Gandhi and hence there was no alternative for us but to go in for replicas along with few originals which are preserved by us. This is a normal practice with museums.



Kisanbhai Trivedi, Secretary, Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust, Ahmedabad

Laying a highway

Apropos of *No thoroughfare (Delhi Diary,* 15 March) regarding the Kalpi national highway, which connects Kanpur to Bombay, via Kalpi. The land for the construction of 18.912 kms of the Kanpur bypass in Kanpur district was to be made available to the P.W.D free of cost by the Kanpur development authority (K.D.A.) as per the decision taken at the government level in 1955. In the beginning, K.D.A. handed over land for about 14 kms in different stretches on which work has been taken up. Later on, K.D.A. could not hand over the land on account of court cases filed by the landowners, and secondly, due to financial difficulty. As such, the ministry of transport in the government of India agreed to meet 65 per cent of the cost of the land remaining to be acquired as decided on 8 June 1979, between officers of the M.O.T, P.W.D., and K.D.A. The M.O.T. share is available with P.W.D. and can be paid immediately to K.D.A. when they hand over the land to the P.W.D. Several meetings had taken place to resolve this crisis even at the government level, without result. The P W.D. has made all efforts, but even now, 1 83 kms of land in different stretches, spanning the full length of the Kanpur bypass, are still to be handed over. The land along a two-km stretch has been handed over by the K.D.A. but farmers do not allow the P.W.D. to work on it on the plea that they have not received compensation. The district magistrate Mr Ram Krishnan had been apprised of this several times in the past and his cooperation had been sought to acquire the land, but in vain. An alternative route to Panki via Dada Nagar, exists. It is under the charge of the Nagar Mahapalika, Kanpur and is used occasionally when the main road in front of Armapur is closed to heavy traffic due to the change of factory shifts. The P.W.D. is trying its best to complete this bypass subject to the availability of land.

Executive Engineer, National Highway Division, P.W.D., Kanpur

Insurgents in RBI

The murderous bombs of Assam (26 April) is a timely and accurate account of the insurgency in Assam. It is astonishing that the RBI employee who was nabbed by the police for his alleged involvement in the plot to stage a robbery at the RBI has not been suspended even two months after his arrest. This shows that the insurgents have sympathisers in the local RBI branch. Incidentally, on 6 February 1981, certain employees of the bank had reported for duty in defiance of the call for non-cooperation given by the Karmachari Parishad (which is a segment of the AAGSP), to comply with the appeal of the Taimur government and the RBI authorities to attend office. The following day they were brutally assaulted inside the bank's premises—even inside the local manager's chamber, in his presence—by some of their colleagues. The local management did not complain to the police against the miscreants, or take disciplinary action against them. It therefore appears that the local management of RBI, Gauhati, either willingly or out of fear, is supporting extremists in the bank It is time the RBI's central office made a proper enquiry into the goings-on in its Gauhati branch.
Tarini Mohan Das, Gauhati

Though the Assam agitation is presently not at a peak, owing to school examinations, a solution is nowhere in sight. If the union and Assam governments do not see reason shortly, matters may get worse and even using the NSA will prove futile
N. P. Kumar, Bangalore

Acts of violence can be an effective way of demonstrating one's indignation and stirring up passion, but such barbaric killings cannot solve the thorny Assam problem.
Shamim Ahmed King, New Delhi

It is the government that is, in the ultimate analysis, responsible for the sad and sudden death of Mr E. S. Parthasarathy, an illustrious officer.
Subir Kar, Rourkela

It was inhuman to kill Mr E. S Parthasarathy, an honest officer The agitationists should act rationally and try to find a peaceful solution to the problem.
M Vishwajith Rai, Puttur

According to Maipak Sarma's statement to police officers, the former Manipur CM Mr R K Dorendra Singh gave Rs 4,000 to him in Shillong. There must be many more high dignitaries who are involved in Manipur's insurgent organisations like PREPAK and PLA.
Chaothoi Meitei, Imphal

The death of Mr Parthasarathi shows what barbarism man is capable of
Biswajit Kar, 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Last letter

We have accepted reservation for the PM's job. Why can't we accept reservation for other jobs?
R. Bhatia, New Delhi

ANOTHER SONRISE AT AMETHI

M. J. AKBAR reports from the campaign trail

Are you sleeping, are you sleeping, Brother John? Brother John? Ring the bell for matins, ring the bell for matins, ding, ding, dong.

It was completely incongruous. The place was Biraj, the time was a little before ten in the morning, and a small stage and *pandal* had been set up in front of the local cooperative store. Biraj was a cluster of brown huts in the middle of brown, water-starved land, and the people were living definitions of our country's poverty. They had collected there that morning—mainly women and children, who seemed excited; the expressions on the faces of men wandered between mild curiosity and cynicism—to hear yet another claimant to their parliamentary seat (and perhaps, later, to the ultimate *gaddi* in Delhi). In the elections since 1977 they had seen enough VIPs and heard enough promises to saturate even the most sympathetic of ears; they had participated in the high drama of demolishing an image and then rebuilding it; and now they were waiting to see the latest image they were expected to create. And while they waited, a small girl had gone behind the microphone and was entertaining them by singing, in her nursery-class sing-song voice, the *Brother John* rhyme. She followed it up with *Twinkle twinkle little star*. Her father beamed proudly: he was rich enough to be able to send his daughter to a school where they taught English nursery rhymes; perhaps he was the only one in the area rich enough to do so.

Suddenly the girl was shooed away as the soft brrr of an approaching jeep was heard. There was not much sound, as the jeep was not travelling on any road—for the simple reason that Biraj does not have any road. Its line of communication to the big world on the highway and beyond is an uneven dust track that dips and sways drunkenly and is layered by what seems at least a foot of dust which shoots upwards like a stream of water when the speeding wheels of a jeep drive into it.

The jeep braked to a halt, and a posse of ladies tumbled out enthusiastically: There was a murmur of disappointment; this was only an advance party. The women began shooing the children towards the space in front of the dias where the candidate would sit, to form the core of this small crowd. Women joined the children; the men, of course, still hung around, too proud to join an audience which had only an empty stage to stare at yet: they would gather when Rajiv Gandhi himself turned up.

In five minutes, the Real Thing did turn up, preceded by the sound of amplifiers announcing his arrival and encouraging villagers to come and witness their latest hero. This was it, and the extra-large, specially modified (no glass screen in front, two powerful amplifiers attached to metal rods on either side of the jeep; a powerful light to illuminate the candidate's face during campaign journeys in the dark) jeep led a convoy of half a dozen vehicles that formed the VIP candidate's touring party. Rajiv Gandhi sat on the side of the front seat, clearly visible to bystanders on the roads. Beside him was the local Congress (I) MLA, Mohammad Yasin, and at the wheel was Mr Mohan Singh, the ex-MLA and also the ex-*rajah* of Tiloi (naturally, he was often still addressed as Raja Sahab). He stepped down from the jeep accompanied by the fervid exhortations of thin cheerleaders leading choruses of the expected "Rajiv Gandhi Zindabad!" (Later someone did remember to raise, in Biraj, the cry "Sanjay Gandhi amar rahe" but elsewhere the past was quite drowned in the obeisances to the future.)

As soon as Rajiv Gandhi stepped out you realised that this man was trying to say something through his clothes. He was wearing well-creased kurta, churidaar, and a khadi cap. The clothes were not accidentally chosen; they were meant to represent something. The khadi cap was not worn by either mistake or passing fancy. there had been discussions among Rajiv Gandhi's advisers about whether it should form part of the attire or not. It had to be an important decision because the Gandhi *topi* had gone out of fashion. Certainly Sanjay Gandhi and his followers kept such caps, if they had any, in their cupboards, and of course Sanjay had replaced the churidaar which his grandfather and his father wore with the wide pyjamas. But even apart from them, the Gandhi cap had disappeared from the heads of even those young Congressmen who were not on Mrs Gandhi's side: when was the last time one saw Sharad Pawar or A. K. Antony or Priya Ranjan Das Munshi with a Gandhi cap? (Doubtless when they all join Rajiv Gandhi they will bring their old caps out.) The clothes were a message of restoration to a tradition started by Motilal Nehru, a tradition incorporating Feroze Gandhi.

So if, stepping out of that jeep on that hot morning in Amethi, it suddenly looked as if a young and handsome Feroze Gandhi had turned up to ask the people to send him to Parliament, it was only as it was meant to be.

The image was reinforced audibly. The man with the microphone in Rajiv Gandhi's jeep who was introducing the candidate all over the countryside, took care to mention that Jawaharlal Nehru's grandson, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's son and "Feroze Sahab's son" had come to campaign.

"Can you please tell him (Rajiv Gandhi) to make that into a road? We have great difficulty,

baboo." The villager had seen me exchange a word or two with the candidate and thought I was a confidant. Rajiv Gandhi had finished his speech (still tinged with hesitancy after only a week on the stump, but clearly improving with each meeting—though of course he has a long, long way to go before he can make any claims about oratory), and was walking briskly back to his jeep amidst the usual hurrahs. The villager's request summed up the whole election campaign.

There is, in fact, nothing to report about the election contest, because there is no contest. Mr Sharad Yadav, the Lok Dal candidate who is about Rajiv Gandhi's age, is making a few noises, some sensible, some born of frustration (his promise, for instance, to convert Amethi into a Kurukshetra), but surely Yadav too realises that his presence in the field is more an affirmation of principle than a genuine battle for votes. And Congress(U)'s Bhim Singh has left Jammu and come to Amethi in a pathetic attempt to get some free publicity. The battle for Amethi was resolved even before it started, for logical reasons. Who would spurn a candidate who could bring a measure of life to the fields, a sliver of hope to unemployed youth? Now that Rajiv Gandhi has joined politics, presumably he wants a constituency which will send him to Parliament for a number of terms. And being Mrs Gandhi's son, he has the ability to divert investment into Amethi: surely if Medak can get Rs 1,000 crores or whatever, Amethi can benefit to at least half that amount. Therefore.

Actually, the past record is not as complimentary to the ruling family as one might imagine. Nobody expected that Sanjay Gandhi would immediately raise the per capita income of Amethi from its abysmal low, but one and a half years after Sanjay Gandhi vindicated his politics from the constituency which had once humiliated him, nothing much of the promised bonanza of schools and industries and water and electricity has actually materialised—although a regular supply of politicians has taken care to stop over in this VIP constituency and build a few more castles in the air. Typical is the fate of a 40-acre plot beside the main road on Munshiganj, a few kilometres away from Amethi city. This is where the great Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, consisting of no less than 500 beds, is supposed to come up. When we visited this spot, instead of foundations and labourers and architects, all we could see were two tents, a supplies-laden car, one man shaving, another drinking tea and a third sitting on his haunches on the field urging us to take photographs of a vague machine in the near distance. When we asked when work would begin on the hospital, we got polite smiles in reply.

This however does not translate into anger against either Mrs Indira Gandhi or her family: Rajiv Gandhi is still a source of hope. In any case, they say, can Sharad Yadav even begin to compare in terms of potential benefits to the area? So the story is not full of tension and drama, but a story of initiation, of a journey from the air-conditioned cocoon in which Rajiv Gandhi has spent his first three and a half decades, to the heat, dust and deceptions of public life.

Of course, conditions are neither as hot nor as dusty for Rajiv Gandhi as they might have been had he not been son of the PM. Further, as he himself puts it, "Nehrus get a headstart" with the people. However, they also get a great deal of sycophancy, and of course Rajiv Gandhi is getting his due both on the plains of Amethi and in the columns of newspapers which are full of statements from "leaders" known and unknown heralding the annointment of a new crown prince.

There was evidence too that enough was being done to ensure a smooth passage for Rajiv Gandhi. He may be making a public effort to ensure that no "government machinery" is visible around his campaign, but certainly a good deal of private machinery was visible. The number of jeeps and Ambassadors, for instance, flying the Congress(I) flag and eating up expensive fuel seemed quite out of proportion to a candidate's requirements. And all the weary, timeworn tricks of this trade were brought into play too. The Lok Dal candidate of 1980, Mr Mohammad Isa, along with his comrade in the party Mr Uma Shankar Yadav, decided on 20 May that Chaudhury Charan Singh was, after all, an extremely rotten man, and the future of the country (not to mention the present of Isa and Yadav) was prosperous only in the secure hands of Rajiv Gandhi, so they left their party to join the Congress(I) and campaign for Rajiv Gandhi. Happily, as the old Congress proverb tells us, they will be forgotten after 14 June. This was not the only evidence of "politics as she is done." A little before Mr Rajiv Gandhi filed his nomination papers from Amethi, Mr Ajay Singh was suddenly transferred from Deoria and brought in as SP of Amethi. There is nothing extraordinary about this; transfers keep taking place all the time and, as we all know, are perfectly legal. But this transfer seemed just a wee bit special—Ajay Singh's father-in-law was one of Mrs Gandhi's lawyers in the famous case against Raj Narain.

Apart from the Communists and the Congress(U), the leaders of all the major and minor political parties come from Uttar Pradesh. Mrs Indira Gandhi, of course, is from Allahabad. The second largest vote-gatherer (though, a poor second) Charan Singh is from Meerut. H. N. Bahuguna, whether considered from Garhwal or Allahabad, is still from UP. Atal Behari Vajpayee comes from the Agra region. Chandra Shekhar belongs to Ballia on the eastern edge of the state. And the by-elections of 14 June have become, in a sense, a contest among the opposition leaders to prove their individual worth. These by-elections will do nothing to radically affect the present of Indian politics. But they could leave a long shadow on the future.

Mrs Gandhi is using this round of by-elections to resolve the question of succession in her party. And the opposition is using this as a test (hence, no alliance) to prove which political party has any credibility left after the gruesome civil wars which followed defeat. These elections could give some indication about whether there is anything like an alternative to Congress(I) possible; whether the people are beginning to gather around one of the many nuclei strewn on the opposition side—or whether Mrs Gandhi, for better or for worse, still remains the best of them all. The patterns for the next few years are going to be established in these elections, both on the side of the ruling party and on the other side of the barricades.

The future within the Congress(I) is not very difficult to predict. Rajiv Gandhi, after winning his spurs, will take up a general secretaryship in the party, and attempt to pump a little life into that flabby outfit. He will use the opportunity to build up a core of loyalists who will be expected to stick by him in the coming years—contemporaries like Sharad Pawar, Antony, Munshi would be welcome to join the new-look, "cleansed" Congress under Rajiv's gentle leadership, while the more nasty elements of the Sanjay Congress would be sent further into the wilderness The party would become respectable again. However, no challenge to Rajiv would be appreciated

It is in this light that the very serious effort to defeat Mr Bahuguna must be seen. If Mr Bahuguna loses, then the credibility of the opposition touches a new low, and it becomes easier for the ruling party to say that it is the only political party with any meaning, therefore all those with any faith in "secularism, socialism and democracy" should return to the fold and build up a "national consensus" instead of wasting their time over a national alternative.

The BJP, although it ran away fast enough from Amethi (won in 1977 by their candidate), will be desperate to prove that what a compliant press has written about Mr Vajpayee's future is not complete nonsense. If it is exposed once again as an outfit whose base has not increased from the old Jana Sangh strength despite its fashionable new name and deceitful "Gandhian socialism," then it will be unable to attract the new support it needs to become important on a national scale.

And Chaudhury Charan Singh, of course, will be seeking to establish once again that the Lok Dal is the only party between Amritsar and Cuttack and Patna which can challenge the Congress(I). It is vital for the Lok Dal to either win or come second in all the constituencies it is contesting.

The stakes are not small. The wheel has now begun spinning.

Searching for the Mr Clean image

By BARUN SENGUPTA

Rajiv Gandhi is now formally in politics, but even before Sanjay Gandhi's death he took some part in this area, though strictly behind the scenes, and to only a minor extent. After her defeat in the 1977 elections, Mrs Gandhi used to consult Rajiv Gandhi too on some political matters, and her party's central publicity campaign for the 1980 Parliamentary elections was organised mainly by Rajiv Gandhi and his friends. After Sanjay Gandhi's death, Rajiv Gandhi increased his active interest in both politics and government. Though still an Indian Airlines pilot, he was meeting Congress(I) chief ministers, union cabinet ministers, and even down to the occasional PCC((I) leader to discuss political and administrative problems. But the answer to whether he also took decisions and issued instructions is more ambiguous.

To begin with, the Nehru family's style of functioning is not to convey decisions and instructions directly. They always go through somebody else—a trusted man (but not a member of the family) who acts as the conduit. Both Pandit Nehru and Mrs Gandhi have followed this policy, but Sanjay Gandhi partially broke with this tradition. Rajiv Gandhi, however, has adhered strictly to the old family tradition. These trusted aides sometimes play the role of advisers, but they never have the authority to take independent decisions on important matters. That right is always reserved for chosen members of the family. For a year now Rajiv Gandhi has talked to many party leaders and has certainly helped his mother take important decisions, but how much of the decision-making was personally his is difficult to assess.

Secondly, Rajiv Gandhi does not reveal his mind very readily to anyone. Sanjay Gandhi was quick and cryptic; he seldom listened to anyone for more than five minutes. But the elder brother is the opposite. He has the rare capacity of listening to even a total bore for 15 minutes without indicating what is on his mind. In this he is more like his mother.

With Rajiv Gandhi likely to become [illegible] soon and possibly also take [illegible] a party post, will the style of functioning of the Congress(I) or the government be affected much? The answer is no. The general style of functioning will remain more or less the same and the objective identical. But there will be some change (not total) in who becomes who. But since Rajiv Gandhi is much more cautious than his younger brother was, he will not be drastic in his shuffles. One may even see a return of some of Pandit*ji*'s finesse. Nehru thought up a Kamaraj Plan to oust those he did not want. On the other hand, Mrs Gandhi went to war with her adversaries in 1969 by sacking the deputy Prime Minister most unceremoniously. Sanjay Gandhi did not hesitate to send his stormtroopers to the courts. Rajiv Gandhi would not do a thing like that.

The main objective, of course, remains the same: Pandit*ji* was clearing the way for Mrs Gandhi; Mrs Gandhi was clearing the way for Sanjay Gandhi, and she is now doing it for Rajiv Gandhi. No one who can be even a remote threat to Rajiv Gandhi in the future will be allowed to occupy a position of power in either the party or the government. This was true in Sanjay Gandhi's case and is more so now as Rajiv does not have his younger brother's personal experience in politics and needs greater protection. The old guard, men with old political links, ambitions, independent bases and connections do not have any future in the Congress(I).

Those who think that Rajiv, being a decent person, will bring back some who have been sent into the wilderness are living in a fool's paradise. Men like Narasimha Rao, R. Venkataraman, Pranab Mukherjee and N. D. Tiwari will continue to be important in the union cabinet. And chief ministers like A. R. Antulay, Arjun Singh and Jagannath Pahadia are ideally suited to present needs. The party will be run by persons of the standing of Kalpnath Rai, S. S. Mahapatra and Mrs Rajendra Bajpayee. It is not that these people are necessarily worthless; indeed some could even be called competent. But they are political light weights. Nor do they have much political manoeuvrability. They are more or less dependent on the Nehru family, and will continue to be so.

Some of Sanjay Gandhi's associates who might become loyal to Rajiv Gandhi, (and do not try to play games by using Maneka Gandhi's name) will be retained for two reasons: First, to utilise their services for "appropriate" jobs and, second, for their help in the event of another Emergency. Rajiv Gandhi's personal friends cannot really form a group of "stormtroopers" as Sanjay Gandhi's could. Under disturbed conditions politicians need stormtroopers and bodyguards more than quiet operators and articulate advisers. But Rajiv Gandhi cannot be expected to give any prominent lieutenant of Sanjay Gandhi any important role immediately. This is because he is more interested in building up a "Mr Clean" and "Mr Decent" image. In fact, that is one reason he has not, yet, privately met any of the business tycoons—not one of, the Birlas, the Modis, the Pauls. Not that he is anti-private sector; it is only the consideration of image that stops him from associating with them right now.

On 22 May Rajiv Gandhi, Congress(I) candidate for the Amethi by-election and son of the Prime Minister, had a gruelling programme. Beginning from 7.45 in the morning, he was scheduled to stop and speak at 19 points through the course of a long and hot day in different, strewn-out villages of the Tiloi sector of the Amethi parliamentary constituency. It was not a particularly unusual programme for a politician trying to win an election; the only difference, of course, was that this politician was on his maiden effort; he had never seen the dust-laden, roadless, hungry India at such close quarters before. M. J. AKBAR *spent part of the morning with the candidate, and then during the half-hour break for lunch Rajiv Gandhi gave this slightly hurried interview.*

'How can my mother prepare me for the Prime Ministership?'

Q: The first question has to be the most obvious one: how do you react to the charge that your entry into politics is feudalism in a democratic garb?

A: I don't understand the question, firstly.

Q: I understand it.

A: Isn't it contradictory? If you accept democracy, if you accept the electorate's verdict, why do you doubt the electorate's verdict, why do you question the electorate's verdict?

Q: The point is different, surely. The electorate sends 350 or more MPs from your mother's party, but every MP does not become as important as you are going to become. That is the point.

A: Isn't that something far ahead? Aren't you thinking much faster (than required)? How do you know I will become that important?

Q: Everybody already perceives you as more important. The public reacts in a particular manner because you are more important. Don't you think you are more important than the average Congress(I) MP?

A: (Pause) If I want to be.

Q: You don't want to be?

A: I'll try not to be.

Q: There is the specific feeling that you are being groomed to be Prime Minister. Are you being groomed to be PM? Do you want to be the PM?

A: Well, at the moment I am totally involved in fighting this election, which means intensive touring of the constituency, as you yourself have seen; the election itself isn't much, but—*country is really like?*

A: Yes; because I've never been around so much. One has got to do this. If one has to be in politics, one has got to know the country before one can do anything. The idea really is to, at the moment, find out what is required, what is happening...

Q: Is your mother preparing you for the prime ministership?

A: How can my mother prepare me for the prime ministership? Supposing she does try: if it is not wanted by the people, it will get rejected.

Q: Beyond a certain point you have to do it yourself, you mean.

A: One will have to perform, even within the party. Once one is out in an election campaign, she (Mrs Gandhi) is not responsible (for success or failure) at all; it is the electorate which decides then.

Q: Your joining politics was sudden—in the sense that you had to decide suddenly during the last year; before that you presumably never contemplated such a life. But now that you have joined, what specific ideology do you want to bring with you? Or is your entry just an exercise in trying to acquire power for its own sake?

A: As a member of the Congress Party, I subscribe to the ideology of the party as laid down in its manifesto.

Q: Well, the interpretation of that manifesto is pretty vague: how should one describe you—left-leaning, right-leaning, centrist (whatever that means)?

A: If you look at our manifesto, you will see that the only significant manifesto

"There can be no question of subsidising the public sector: our taxes should be used for other things than subsidising public sector companies."

"Q: How did it feel when you first heard Rajiv Gandhi Zindabad?

A: A bit irritating ...sort of irritating and embarrassing."

[illegible]

comprehensive, covering all aspects of policy; the direction is fairly clearly laid down.

Q: But I was asking about you: if you had to give yourself a label, what would it be? Leftist, or—

A: That (the expression of any views) I will do within the party forum.

Q: I see. You will not talk about such things to media.

A: If I talk to media I am breaking party discipline. I would debate within the party, not outside.

Q: Well, let us take a simple issue—or perhaps it shouldn't be called a simple issue—like the nationalised industries. Do you think the role they play is justified, or do you think the private sector should be given a greater role in sectors like power generation or heavy industries?

A: We make a big *hauwwa* (a Hindi word, basically implying 'unnecessarily big deal') out of nationalised industries: some of them work as well as or better than the private industries. The basic fact is *jo desi management hain woh desi management hain* (both sectors are run by Indian managements). If Tata is good, then it is because a specific company is managed better. There is certainly a place for the public sector, but the public sector must perform. There can be no question of subsidising the public sector: our taxes should be used for other things than subsidising public sector companies. There is no reason why they should not perform.

Q: Tell me, before you joined politics officially, did you indulge in a year of backroom politics in Delhi?

A: I wouldn't say so. There are a lot of charges, that I had (V.C.) Shukla fired, I had so-and-so posted somewhere, I had so-and-so...it is, in fact, not true. I have been talking to Shukla right through: before he was sacked, after he was sacked—

Q: While he was sacked?

A: (Chuckles) Yes, while he was being sacked. I had no problems with Shukla. He had his problems at his level.

Q: With the Prime Minister?

A: I wouldn't say Prime Minister; the Madhya Pradesh party president. He went because of Madhya Pradesh politics, of which I know nothing. Even if I wanted to I couldn't have given any accurate assessment of what was required politically in Madhya Pradesh.

Q: But the fact is that your friends are sitting in 1 Safdarjung Road.

A: Fotedar, they say, is my friend. Fotedar has been working for my mother since before I was born, maybe: *mera dost kahan se nikal aaya* (how has he suddenly become my friend)? He has been running my mother's elections since—I don't know, since 1967, I think. *Mera dost kahan se bana?*

Q: But India Today *published a picture of you, Fotedar and Vijay Dhar together at the PM's house.*

A: What can I do? I am talking to you—*ab yahan se koi photo le kar chaap de* (if someone takes our picture and prints it) and says that we are plotting to overthrow so-and-so, what can I do about it? Fotedar is employed by the AICC as a secretary of the president of the party.

Q: You've entered politics now; how does it feel like?

A: At the moment there is too much work to feel anything.

Q: How did it feel when you first heard "Rajiv Gandhi Zindabad!"

A: (Pauses) A bit irritating...sort of irritating and embarrassing; mixed, you know, that sort of...annoying.

Q: You are trying to project what is being called a "Mr Clean" image—

A: Now wait a minute. I am trying to project it, or is it that the media can find nothing to pin on me? If you had found anything—when I say 'you' I mean the media...

Q: Oh I'm sure that if the media had found anything with evidence behind it, they would have published it: talking for myself, if I do find anything with concrete evidence, I will publish it.

A: I'm sure you will. I'll make sure I don't do anything which you can possibly find.

Q: Have you, for the purposes of this election, taken money from anybody?

A: Only the party.

Q: You have not met any fatcat, any industrialist—

A: No. Not one. For the elections, there are two completely separate expenses. One, my own expenses: that means, strictly my own expenses—the jeep I am going in, and precisely what I do: if I fly Indian Airlines to Lucknow then that counts. But if Raja Sahab (Mr Mohan Singh, ex-MLA of Tiloi, who was campaigning for Rajiv Gandhi in the constituency) is going along with me in his jeep then that is not my expense; that expense is being covered by the Congress, the DCC; my expense is entirely out of my own bank account.

Q: You are sure you haven't met any industrialist, any moneybag?

A: Absolutely. A lot of people have come and offered (money); I have not accepted any funds.

Q: You wouldn't like to mention who has come and offered money?

A: (Smiles) It would be embarrassing. For them.

Q: How does your wife Sonia react to your entering politics? I think you told me once that she was quite against such an idea.

A: She's worried about time; that means time lost to the family. However, at my present age, and at my level of politics, I don't think the time lost would be substantially different from the amount of time a normal working person is away from home. It might be less time that I had when I worked for Indian Airlines...

"I am not [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Q: Tell me Rajiv, do you think the Nehrus are somehow a Chosen Family, destined to run the country?
A: I don't think so. They are Chosen only to the extent that the electorate chooses them.
Q: But isn't it a question of one Nehru building the way for the next generation?
A: I don't think that other important leaders have been able to do it for children with ambitions to be in politics. It is not something that any parent can do; it is something that the electorate does. But as a Nehru you get a headstart. The people feel that three generations have sacrificed for the country. So they expect that the next generation will make sacrifices too. So the goodwill is there. But I don't think that can carry you more than just the first step. I mean, the minute you are in public—okay, all right, I've come in one week ago, ten days ago, and this *tamasha* (of people crowding around to see him etc) might last for six months; but after six months they are not going to put up with me if I misbehave.
Q: That is very true.
A: So...*ek kadam mil jaayegi, lekin uske baad nahin* (I will get help in the first step, but not after that).
Q: Tell me, do you have any specific plan of action for the foreseeable future? You are going to be elected; I can see that But after becoming an MP what do you intend to do? Do you want to do party politics, or enter the government as a minister, or simply be an MP?
A: At the moment it would really be getting established here as an MP for Amethi, seeing what is really wrong, what has to be done, getting an operational set-up going here, which will take a full year or maybe more.
Q: That means, basically serving your constituency.
A: Basically, the constituency.
Q: As an MP would you challenge the government if necessary: for example if the government did not fulfil the demands of Amethi constituency?
A: That would have to be done through a party forum.
Q: I am not asking you to break the whip, but surely it is the job of an MP to keep the government on its toes.
A: Certainly. If the government started doing something which was violently against what the electorate wanted, if it was really upsetting them, then the government would have to be challenged.

Q: Now for a question whose answer all the chief ministers must be awaiting with bated breath: are you going to interfere with the functioning of the Congress(I) chief ministers?

A: Not at all. You see, as long as the chief ministers are performing well, nobody even talks about them. It is the chief ministers who do not perform who get into all sorts of controversies, all sorts of names are bandied around: so-and-so has done this, so-and-so has done that: but the fact is, they are not performing. You hear very few things against Vishwanath (Pratap Singh, chief minister of UP); you hear very few things against Antulay (chief minister of Maharashtra).

Q: Antulay? I've heard a great deal about Antulay.

A: In the last two months he has got into some controversies, but, on the whole he has done a fairly good job; Vishwanath too has done a good job. There are another few people about whom you don't hear controversies; about others, there is no end to the controversies.

Q: You went to Biharsharif with your mother.

A: Only up to Patna.

Q: But you were aware of what was happening in Biharsharif.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you, with a clean conscience, allow the kind of mismanagement that went on in those riots? It is amazing, the sheer mismanagement by the government.

A: I know. No, you can't possibly allow it. But, there is a very serious problem here: the problem is in the hire and the fire. There is nothing you can do (about government servants). There is no way you can substantially punish anyone who bungles. There is no way.

Q: You can certainly punish the chief minister, and then the chief secretary, and the message will go down the line—

A: Okay: supposing a magistrate bungles. All right, the chief minister is responsible. So you sack the chief minister. But the magistrate continues: if he doesn't continue here, he continues there: he opens fire somewhere else. You can do nothing with that man.

Q: You mean there is no solution to

Rajiv Gandhi's standard campaign speech

Mothers, brothers, sisters: Perhaps you do not know why Sanjay came to Amethi to contest the elections, instead of going anywhere else. He came because Amethi is the most backward area in Uttar Pradesh, and he thought that if he could get some work done quickly, some progress achieved, Amethi would catch up with the other districts. This is why he started so much work here, you will remember, in '76. But in '77, the government changed, and all the work was stopped. Roads were being built; they were left incomplete. Water could not be brought to the fields. Those who wanted to set up industries were asked to go elsewhere. The college that was supposed to come up was shifted. Just think: if all this work had been continued, you would have had water, roads, education. But the Janata government did not allow this to happen: why? They used to say that they would work for the people, then why did they stop this?

They will come to you now to ask for your vote. You must give them a determined answer—that you know what is their worth, what is their ability to help you. This answer you must not give on the streets, but on 14 June when you go to vote. Give them such a reply that they are not able to show their faces to you again.

The development that Sanjay had promised was not a promise made by Sanjay alone: this was also a promise made by the Congress, and that promise will be honoured. But your progress will not come only by the government starting programmes: you will have to participate equally in the effort, your perspiration must flow. If water comes, then you will have to work in the fields to make water productive.

If industry comes, then you will have to labour to make the factory productive. Only if you work can government assistance really make a difference. The government will help, that I can assure you. On behalf of the Congress Party I can assure you that the government will help to the maximum extent possible. But it will also require your strength—only then can the shape of Amethi change.

This election is your election. No government official will come. You will have to look at this election as a means of your development, and fight it as your election.

It will be [illegible] of voting. [illegible] many [illegible] later [illegible] winds [illegible] vote is equal to the vote of [illegible] of men.

People say that the wind that will blow on 14 June will be in favour of the Congress. I am sure you will make that wind a storm.

the problem of irresponsible bureaucrats?

A: Anything happens, they get an order from the court. You can't sack anybody.

Q: That sounds very pessimistic.

A: *Abhi Air India ke case main kya hua hai* (What has happened in the Air India case)? I don't know what rule it is in the airline rules, but the Bombay High Court has said that they cannot sack anybody. No matter what.

Q: Are you saying that nobody is accountable for anything in this country?

A: You tell me. Let's take the Air India business: sabotage, PM involved, whatever, all that aside—we will not go into those complications. There was serious negligence of duty. The authorities filed an FIR. If there is a robbery in your house, if there is a murder in your house, you keep the evidence: you don't send it to Singapore and then call the police. The CBI reached Bombay, and found that the plane, *(Makalu)* had reached Singapore—all the cables already removed, put in a hangar. *Ab woh bechare CBI wale dekhenge kya wahan jaake?* They can't fingerprint, they can't check for anything. Somebody has to be accountable out here...In Bombay airport people just walk into the hangar! There was a case of a girl being raped in an empty aircraft! Somebody has to be accountable for all this.

Q: What remedy are you suggesting?

A: I don't know yet. *Baith ke baat karenge, dekhenge kya hota hai* (We'll sit and talk, see what happens). But something has to be done somewhere. There has to be accountability. Today if you don't perform as editor of your magazine, you get sacked. You have to perform to remain there. That same thing must come into the government. There may be a little more control, so that such powers are not misused, but accountability must be there.

Q: Are you suggesting a curb in trade union rights?

A: No, no. I was quite a noisy member of our union (while a pilot in Indian Airlines).

Q: You are not suggesting a return to the kind of liberty given in hiring and firing during the Emergency?

A: No, certainly not. Certainly not. That is why I said that it requires a lot of going into to see what controls there should be.

Q: The time for your next meeting is drawing near, so I will end with a last question—and we'll end with a question capable of embarrassing you. It is said that you have sidetracked all those who were close to your brother Sanjay.

A: Who were Sanjay's followers that I have sidetracked?

Q: One hears names like Kamal Nath or Tytler...

A: How has Kamal Nath been sidetracked? In what way has he been sidetracked?

Q: They are not as powerful as they were during Sanjay's lifetime.

A: But I am not as powerful as he (Sanjay) was. I cannot dish out power. If I was going to use power, I could distribute some of it to you. *Par agar main hi nahin kar raha hoon to tumhe kya karne doonga* (But if I myself don't have the power, how can I let you be powerful)? I honestly don't think anybody is being ignored; they are all being actively involved at their specific levels. Kamal Nath is a fairly frequent speaker in Parliament; when I say that I don't mean he talks on his own, he is asked by the party to speak in Parliament. He is used in committes, he is used in other places: he does work for the party in various places. Similarly, the other younger MPs are involved. I am not aware of anybody who is not.

Q: You don't think there is anything called a Sanjay lobby which is basically dissatisfied with the present state of affairs?

A: I am not sure what they were doing before, so I am not sure what they expect to do now. But I don't think there is reason for anybody to be dissatisfied. ■

The journey

■ *I am not prepared to jump into politics and stand for elections from Amethi or Allahabad, mainly because it would be wrong purely from a moral point of view, may be not from a political convenience point of view.*

—*India Today, Aug 16-31, 1980.*

■ *I can't any longer pretend that I can maintain what I was before.*

—*India Today, Aug 16-31, 1980.*

■ *The way I look at it is that mummy has to be helped somehow.*

—*India Today, Aug. 16-31, 1980.*

■ *I took the decision (to join politics) on my own in her (Mrs Gandhi's) absence from the country.*

—*Hindustan Times, 12 May, 1981*

■ *Being a Prime Minister's son is not sufficient for entering politics.*

Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980.

■ *There is no question of perpetuating family rule because it is ultimately the electorate who can elect or reject a candidate.*

—*Times of India, 22 May, 1981.*

■ *In a democracy the people are supreme and they have a right to elect any individual, irrespective of whether he is the son of a Prime Minister.*

—*Times of India, 22 May, 1981.*

■ *I would rather start at the base and rise little by little.*

—*Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980*

■ *I am not sure how much I would be able to do. Or, would it be one more person to add to the confusion?*

—*New Delhi, Aug 16-31, 1980.*

■ *I cannot really give her the sort of support he (Sanjay) was giving her.*

—*India Today, Aug. 16-31, 1980.*

■ *I feel quite moved (after joining politics).*

—*Indian Express, 18 May, 1981.*

■ *The class of politicians has fallen very low, because a majority of them do politics solely for power and money.*

—*Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980.*

■ *Foremost quality in a politician should be integrity. Second quality is ambition, not for oneself but for the country.*

—*Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980.*

■ *There is no dirty man in my party.*

—*Hindustan Times, 12 May, 1981.*

■ *I would not do something if I believed it was not for the good of the country.*

—*India. Today, Aug 16-Aug, 1980.*

■ *I do not like fanfare. I like quiet ways.*

—*Times of India, 22 May, 1981.*

■ *I am little more in favour of free enterprise. It is necessary to give people who work some encouragement.*

—*Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980.*

■ *I am against nationalisation for the sake of nationalisation.*

—*Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980.*

■ *We cannot imitate either the Americans or the Russians. We should choose, by adapting to our conditions, what is best in both.*

—*Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980.*

■ *We still have a feudal spirit. That is a fact.*

—*Le Figaro, 16 Sept, 1980.*

ZIA'S MOSCOW CONNECTION

BY RAJINDER PURI

General Zia

Andrei Gromyko

Agha Shahi

THERE is much talk today about clouds of war which threaten the subcontinent. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi started it; other Congress leaders took up the cry. It made a nice diversion. And anyway people don't take such things too seriously. Politicians of the subcontinent are in the habit of crying wolf.

The trouble with crying wolf is of course that people get complacent. Can the wolf of war really ambush us? Even West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu has now joined the chorus: he fears Pakistan's intentions because America is arming it. It is amusing to note how well our leaders smell the smoke but choose to point their noses the wrong way.

There certainly is today a threat of war looming over the subcontinent. But it does not arise from fresh supplies of American arms to Pakistan which in any case will become ready for use and a relevant factor only after a good deal of time. The war threat is much more imminent: it arises from a possible change in Pakistan's relations with the Soviet Union. Nobody quite knows the true nature of the Soviet-Pak relationship today. And it is this fact which really bothers the Indian government.

As far back as late 1979 a very quiet dialogue between the Soviet Union and Pakistan was already under way. According to informed speculation the dialogue concerned itself primarily with prospects of normalising relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It should be borne in mind that this was before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the murder of Amin.

It is unlikely that Pakistan had an inkling of the impending invasion. The effect on the Pakistani leaders of the surprise Soviet invasion must have been traumatic. It was the classic Soviet psychological destabiliser. After a whiff of the carrot came a wallop with the stick. First Pakistani reactions to the invasion were predictable. There was panic and pathetic dependence on the West. Arms for Afghan insurgents based in Pakistan were stepped up and British foreign secretary Lord Carrington's gruff blunt noises of support were lapped up.

However, a change in Pakistan's attitude came about pretty soon. Though President Zia continued to make the same noises there was a subtle but perceptible shift in his attitude. For one thing Pakistan became increasingly cold towards the Afghan insurgents based on her soil. Gradually the insurgents were starved of their supply of arms. Also, despite cordiality on surface the Pakistanis were not without moments of tension and distrust in their dealings with America. The Americans were reportedly keen to give arms with certain built-in safeguards for their use which might allow them a presence in Pakistan to enable closer monitoring of events there. The Pakistanis were resisting this.

It was this resistance by Pakistan and her continuing dialogue with the Soviets which created a quiet crisis of confidence in both Washington and Riyadh. It was also very curious how the clamour against American arms for Pakistan raised by the opposition got such free play in Pakistan's controlled press without disturbing the Zia regime. Obviously there was Zia's inspiration behind this clamour.

The Saudis, who financed two divisions for their own use raised by Pakistan, are reportedly developing

> *Today there pervades a kind of flux in South Asia which best breeds wars and miscalculations ...no government is in a mood to take chances. Anything can happen.*

Afghan rebels near border with Pakistan

second thoughts about the wisdom of that decision. It is understood that a reference to doubts about Pakistan's future direction came up when the Saudi Foreign Minister conferred recently with Mrs Gandhi.

The Americans, the Saudis, the Chinese and the Indian Government are all closely watching how relations between Islamabad and Moscow develop. According to diplomatic sources a big breakthrough in the Soviet-Pak dialogue occurred on September 29 last year when on Mr Agha Shahi's initiative he conferred for 70 minutes with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko at the UN. Both leaders reportedly came out of the meeting locked in an embrace and oozing cordiality.

It is understood that Mr Gromyko outlined the terms on which a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan could be effected as well as a proposal for settling differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan with regard to the Durand Line. Almost immediately after the meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Mr Gromyko returned to Moscow on September 29 itself.

More recently, on May 12 this year, two items appeared on the same day from Islamabad and Moscow.

Official spokesmen in Islamabad confirmed that at long last the Pakistan government had finally reached agreement with the Americans on terms for receiving arms worth a major chunk of the 2.5 billion dollar aid package spread over five years starting next October. The first military aid component was expected to reach only by October 1982. This announcement created 'atmosphere.' In the immediate context, however, it had little relevance. And indeed the very next day the House Foreign Affairs Committee in America decided unanimously to defer the decision on arms aid to Pakistan pending further clarifications by the State Department about Pakistan's proposed nuclear programme. Which for all practical purposes left things pretty much as they were.

In Moscow *Pravda* that day carried an article accusing Pakistan of creating tensions with India and Afghanistan. In one curious passage the article said: "Having submitted to USA's pressure President Zia took an about turn in Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan." Which "about turn" by President Zia did the article refer to? What assurances had President Zia conveyed to the Soviets which now made them feel let down?

What makes matters really confusing is that one is never sure whether the Soviets are giving genuine expression to their views or imparting disinformation. The major powers having got wind of the Soviet-Pak parleys it would not be beyond the ingenuity of the Soviet Union and Pakistan to indulge in histrionics and put the world off their scent.

It would be much safer to assess the outcome of the Soviet-Pak dialogue, which undoubtedly has been held at a very serious level, on the basis of the long-term interests of both powers. Indeed it was Pakistan's seeming obduracy in disregarding her permanent long-term interests after the

An Indian intelligence profile drawn up on President Zia suggests that he is one Pakistani leader capable of "doing a Sadat" against India.

Nobody quite knows the true nature of Soviet-Pak relationship today. And it is this fact which really bothers the Indian government.

Kosygin with Bhutto in Moscow in October 1974

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which first alerted the Indian government about her possible moves under the surface. The most obvious consequence of the Soviet action in Afghanistan, which immediately seized the world's imagination, was the enhanced threat it posed to Pakistan's security. There was a rush of sympathy for Pakistan, even among traditionally hostile circles in India. It was during this period that, briefly, the prospects of a genuine thaw in Indo-Pak relations appeared feasible. That moment soon vanished. Indian opposition leaders rose to the occasion and created a public climate conducive for achieving a breakthrough by our government in its relations with Pakistan. Instead, the government appeared impotent. Indo-Pak contacts never seemed to transcend the level of inane pleasantries.

At the same time Mrs Gandhi appeared reluctant to annoy the least Soviet susceptibilities on the Afghanistan action which in truth had visibly disurbed her. India's support for the Soviet position was not, therefore, sufficiently robust to have pleased overmuch the Kremlin. That was the period, during 1980, when the Indian government appeared adrift and most isolated. In fact, the Government was in a quandary. Understandably, because it was beginning to fear that it had become the victim of a fearful deception. Only now, slowly, the pieces are falling in place and top policy planners are regaining their bearings.

The Government was understandably reticent about its quiet informal feelers to probe Pakistani reactions to the prospects of closer cooperation between our two countries. This was in early 1980, a little after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan The Pakistanis were polite and seemingly grateful for gestures of sympathy but curiously inflexible in their approach, which precluded real prospects of collaboration In the absence of a positive Pakistani response the Government was hesitant to annoy the Soviets more than was necessary.

In fact the government was puzzled. Pakistan's professed alarm over the new Soviet proxmity did not square with her refusal to strike any kind of reasonable deal with India. Instead the leaders of Pakistan appeared obsessed with the need to acquire nuclear capability and a large stockpile of sophisticated arms to counter possible Soviet efforts to destabilise their country.

With her two potentially hostile fronts against India and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan the Pakistani yearning for increased military strength in favour of accommodation with India appeared irrational and hysterical. And President Zia and foreign minister Agha Shahi are neither irrational nor hysterical: they are both cold-blooded realists. President Zia's refusal to respond to the discreet Indian bid could therefore be due only to some card up his sleeve.

What President Zia was holding up his sleeve was of course his Soviet card.

A lot depends therefore on the Soviet options in Pakistan and what use the Kremlin makes of them. This is the crucial aspect on which the future peace of the subcontinent rests.

The liberation of Bangladesh and the occupation of Afghanistan were two milestones for the Soviet Union in their quest for extending influence south of the Durand Line. The emergence of Bangladesh significantly weakened Pakistan economically to make it a ripe plum for the Soviet bear. It was around this time that the idea of the Pakistani steel plant with Soviet aid involving transportation of raw material overland from the Soviet Union to Pakistan was mooted. Add to that Moscow's more recent offer of a nuclear reactor to Islamabad. Clearly the consolidation of Pakistan as a viable Soviet-dominated state is one option before Moscow. This option presupposes Pak-Afghan unity and stability for the Zia regime. The Soviet-Pak dialogue over the past eighteen months must have been exploring precisely these aspects.

If the Soviet Union chooses this option and decides to cooperate with President Zia it should be obvious what the latter would seek in return. First he would want assurances of peace on the Pak-Afghan border to enable him to concentrate on the Indo-Pak front Secondly, he would want assurances that the Soviet Union would exert her pressure in favour of peace and 'the prevention of world war' at an appropriately early stage of a quick sharp Indo-Pak war.

For, there is just one conceivable way by which President Zia can really stabilise himself and emerge as a hero in the Islamic world. And that is by annexing Kashmir. And the only conceivable way by which this could be accomplished would be through a surprise savage attack and a quick ceasefire imposed through the pressure of the superpowers. An Indian intelligence profile drawn up on President Zia suggests that he is one Pakistani leader capable of such a daring gamble and "doing a Sadat" against India.

The Soviets have another option in Pakistan. They can help topple President Zia and balkanise Pakistan. They would then bring into play their Bhutto-family card. The recent skyjacking carried out by Pakistani insurgents based in Kabul gives clear indication of Soviet backing. Murtuza Bhutto, the late President's son, was also among those based in Kabul during the past year.

A curious theory has surfaced among pro-Bhutto circles in the West—that the skyjacking had Zia's own collusion. Among others the London-based Pakistani Tariq Ali is credited with this view. If this is correct it would be eloquent evidence of how deep the Zia-Moscow relationship runs. These traditionally pro-Left Bhutto elements in the West point to Major-General Kim Philby of the Soviet KGB, the noted defector from British intelligence to Moscow, as the mastermind of this operation.

This theory appears farfetched. And the barely concealed effort to draw a distinction between the operations of Moscow and Kim Philby is naive to the point of absurdity. What cannot be denied is the Soviet involvement in the hijacking. And it denotes the leverage Moscow has for any destabilising plans to balkanise Pakistan. In such a Pakistan not only would Moscow stabilise her occupation of Afghanistan but obtain footholds in even more strategic areas of present Pakistan. It is in this overall context that the impending visit to New Delhi by Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua will have to be viewed. The Soviets cannot be happy with the visit. And any event which could throw off-balance the Sino-Indian dialogue would not be unwelcome to them.

It is in this context also that the Indian government's wariness with the Soviets and increasing hostility with domestic communists will have to be viewed. So far the Soviets have given no indication of a change in their stance with India. Indeed, the high-ranking Soviet chief of army staff who in early May conferred with the Indians in New Delhi could not have been more generous or reassuring. Nevertheless no government is in a mood to take chances wth developments in South Asia. Anything can happen. Each government seems to be reappraising existing alignments and exploring new alignments. Endless permutations are possible. Today there pervades a kind of flux in South Asia which best breeds wars and miscalculations. ■

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Hawkins saves Rs. 278 every year on fuel bills

The trials of Swami Agnivesh

Haryana's Janata Party MLA, Swami Agnivesh, has incurred the wrath of Haryana chief minister, Mr Bhajan Lal, for fighting for the rights of bonded labourers working in the brick-kilns and stone quarries of the state. Vivek Sengupta reports.

SONDEEP SHANKAR

Swami Agnivesh

On the morning of 8 May 1981, acting under directions from "higher quarters," the staff of Haryana Bhawan, New Delhi, assisted by CID officials, broke open the door of room number 34A allotted to Swami Agnivesh, a Haryana Janata Party MLA, and threw out his belongings. The Swami was away, having left early that morning for Hyderabad. Protesting the eviction, the Swami's associates claimed that although he had been staying at Haryana Bhawan since 25 November 1980, he had been renewing the allotment, as per rules, every week The Bhawan authorities, on the other hand, charged that the manner of renewal had been procedurally wrong.

The highhanded manner in which the Bhawan authorities threw out Swami Agnivesh highlighted the running feud between the Janata MLA and Mr Bhajan Lal, the Haryana chief minister, on the issue of bonded labour in brick-kilns and stone quarries of Haryana. The Swami has been crusading against bonded labour and has rescued many workers from their bondage. Mr Bhajan Lal, allegedly very close to the powerful brick-manufacturers' lobby with some of his close relatives owning kilns has denied the existence of bonded labour in his state both on the floor of the state Assembly and outside. Ever since the Swami intensified his campaign to free bonded labourers, Mr Bhajan Lal has launched a personal tirade against him.

Liberated labourers on the lawns of the MP Bhawan in New Delhi

SONDEEP SHANKAR

Swami Agnivesh knew a day earlier that he would be evicted, and informed the press on the evening of 7 May. He also complained that Mr Bhajan Lal had threatened him. He complained to the police, but they would not admit an FIR against a CM. Agnivesh added that Mr Bhajan Lal had ordered the transfer of two senior Haryana police officers because they had actively helped free bonded labour. On 13 April, the senior superintendent of police (SSP) Karnal, was transferred, the day after he had freed three children from a brick-kiln, on receipt of a complaint from the SSP, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. Deputy inspector general of police, Hissar, Mr Laxman Das was moved out after he had provided protection while freeing bonded workers from a kiln at Fatehbad on 2 May.

While the Swami addressed reporters in Delhi, Mr Bhajan Lal hit out at him in Chandigarh. The CM threatened that he would use the National Security Act against Swami Agnivesh if he continued to "mislead" brick-kiln workers. The Swami was trying to blackmail brick-kiln owners to extort money from them, said Mr Bhajan Lal. There were no bonded labourers in Haryana and if the Swami carried on his programmes all development work would be hampered.

Who is Swami Agnivesh and how did he get so passionately involved with the cause of bonded labourers? The 40-year-old ochre-robed, muscular Arya Samaji monk from Andhra Pradesh was educated in Chhattisgarh and Calcutta. He taught commerce for a while in Calcutta's St. Xavier's college. In 1968, he left everything and moved to Haryana to work for the Arya Samaj. In 1970, he became a *sanyasi* and one of the founders of the Arya Sabha, a political party which fought for popular causes in the state. His radical politics brought him in direct confrontation with Mr Bansi Lal's government and he was arrested as many as 11 times. In 1977, his party merged into the Janata Party. He contested the elections from Pundri constituency in Kurukshetra district and reached the state Assembly. He became the chairman, board of school education and later, minister for education. On 8 November 1979, he resigned from the state cabinet on the issue of the 17 October firing in Faridabad which caused the death of 12 workers. When Mr Bhajan Lal switched camps last year to join the Congress-(I) he tried to lure the Swami into following him by offering him the same post in the Congress(I) cabinet. But Swami Agnivesh refused.

In late 1978, when he was not yet a minister, Swami Agnivesh learnt that some brick-kiln workers in Rohtak district had been mercilessly beaten up by hired toughs. Some Dalit Panthers from Delhi took them to the capital and organised a protest demonstration. They sought the Swami's help, and he cooperated readily. Says the Swami: "This was the first time that I learnt of the extent of exploitation rampant in the brick-kilns of Haryana." The sheer enormity of numbers moved him for there are 1,460 kilns registered with the state government Each kiln has about 200 workers—60% are from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Of these, at least 10% are under bondage. Living in penury in their native villages, these largely scheduled caste families of labourers are brought by middlemen (*Jamadars*) to Haryana against an initial 'advance' (a euphemism for the amount to keep them in bondage) of Rs 500. They are made to slave for years with little or no wages and are given subsistence food. Terrorised into submission, they are beaten up brutally if they attempt to escape.

Using his MLA's influence, the Swami began to try and rescue them. To this day, he has directly freed several hundred bonded labourers. He described the rescue operations in detail: "On receipt of information about the incidence of bonded labour at a kiln, we go there with a vehicle, at times accompanied by a police party. We ask the workers if they are in bondage. If they confirm our information and are not averse to coming with us, we bring them out of serfdom. Meanwhile, the owner, his toughs and sometimes even the police try to obstruct us. There have been occasions when they have succeeded. Very rarely have I received help from the authorities. I have come to realise that the exploiting class is in league with the authorities and the politicians, even if they belong to my own party."

Swami Agnivesh has fought against the brick-kiln owners both inside and outside the state Assembly. On every occasion he raised the matter in the Assembly. In the recent budget session, the government simply denied that there were any bonded labourers. On 28 March, the Swami introduced a call-attention motion on the issue. In his written reply, CM Mr Bhajan Lal said that there were no bonded labourers in the brick-kilns of Haryana. The Swami says that: "this was a challenge and to prove the veracity of my motion we undertook rescue operations more vigorously."

While the chief minister protested and issued denials, the SSP Karnal rescued three children. It was reported widely in the national press. Later a UNI report mentioned that the MP chief minister, Mr Arjun Singh, had acknowledged that labourers from MP were being made to work in bondage in Haryana. The labour minister of Bihar made a similar statement on 3 April.

The Swami has not been deterred by Bhajan Lal's threats. Recently, he rescued 148 bonded labourers from Lakkarpur village. They were lodged in a *dharamsala* near Delhi from where 52 mysteriously disappeared. They had all come from Akola district in Maharashtra, and the Swami's followers optimistically assume that they went home. The remaining 96 men, women and children, from Chhatisgarh in MP, had made the lawns of the opulent Madhya Pradesh state guest house in the capital their home before the state's resident commissioner moved to evict them. But the Swami was not one to leave them in the lurch. He met the MP deputy chief minister, Mr Shivbhanu Singh Solanki, and persuaded him to make arrangements for their journey home.

Meanwhile, the Swami himself was unceremoniously thrown out from Haryana Bhawan. The eviction has been described by the national press as "truly shameful" and a "case of political vendetta." The police, however, have a different story According to the Swami, after his possessions had been thrown out of the room, the Faridabad police came and took away a slide projector along with slides showing exploitation of brick-kiln workers, taped cassettes of French and Cuban revolutionary songs, and some communist literature. The police said they required the material for investigation into a hitherto unkown case (No 445 dated 15 November 1979 under Section 307 and 34 IPC). The police, however, issued a receipt for the tapes, the literature and the slides to the Haryana Bhawan authorities. Later, the Haryana police told the press that they suspected the monk of having "Naxalite links."

Belongings of bonded labourers strewn on the lawns of MP Bhawan

SONDEEP SHANKAR

The Haryana government has, obviously, toed the line of the CM. On 15 May, a Haryana government press release asserted that workers in brick-kilns were only working as contract labourers. Swami Agnivesh, the note said, has launched a campaign against the quarry owners in the Lakkarpur area because a "king coloniser" of Delhi and friend of Swami Agnivesh was financing his movement so that work would stop in the quarries. The Swami's friend would then develop the areas into real estate. Swami Agnivesh replied that he was indeed a friend of the real estate tycoon, Mr Ram Adhar, but, "he has never asked me to stop the quarrying of stone in the Lakkarpur area. Nor am I interested in closing the quarries. What I want is bonded labour to end. About the mischievous allegation (of the Haryana government), I must say that I hold no brief for (Mr) Ram Adhar or anyone else who might be wanting to develop the area (for real estate) Some of the highest officials of Haryana, including the chief secretary, and even ministers, have land there. Ram Adhar has less land than these people "

The Swami is determined to carry on his crusade for the bonded labourers. Said he: "The abolition of bonded labour was a part of the 20-point programme It goes to the credit of Mrs Gandhi and her government that such an exhaustive law was framed in 1976 and in 1980 they followed it up with the inter-state migration labour act But they (the governments) have been very lethargic about its implementation. I want to organise my rescue teams and organise the kiln and quarry workers to make them aware of their rights. I want to persuade them to stop drinking, gambling and wasting money in social functions, according to the teachings of the Arya Samaj I want to meet the Prime Minister and tell her that our crusade is not against her or her party but against a deep rooted social malady being perpetuated because of exploitative feudal and capitalist production relations I want to submit a memorandum to her against the way Bhajan Lal is sabotaging the most important plank of the 20 point programme " ■

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Saved, for the time being

*If the tiger has to be saved then it has to be loved first, and what better way to make it lovable than to collect within the covers of a handsomely produced book some of the finest photographs of this most handsome of beasts in his natural surroundings. The 123 photographs in Guy Mountfort's 120-page book (*Saving the tiger, Michael Joseph, London, £7.95*) are easily its strongest point and the publishers acclaim the title as "the fullest pictorial documentation of tigers ever assembled in a book." The superb reproduction of the colour photographs makes the book a visual treat and is apt to turn the most unadventurous of city-dwellers into ardent fans of the lord of the jungle. The author, a naturalist and campaigner for the rescue of endangered species, is one of the best qualified to write on the tiger as it was he who initiated the world campaign to save it in 1969. And the tiger has certainly been brought back from the brink. In 1969 there were roughly 5,000 tigers left, compared to 100,000 in 1930. In 1979 the total had risen to 6,400. The text, which serves as a good introduction to those who wish to have some idea of the tiger in the wild, who threatened it and how it is being saved, is largely a summary of the pioneering scientific investigation done by George Schaller, Charles McDougal and Kailash Sankhala. It is gratifying to know that the government of India has right from 1969 done more than its due share to save the tiger. And how much has it all cost so far? In comparative terms, the price of a single modern bomber aircraft!*

ANALYSIS

Gujarat: Graveyard of Mahatma's hopes

MADHU LIMAYE proposes a new and more equitable system of reservations

The first quarter of 1981 has seen the outbreak of a bitter social conflict in Gujarat over the issue of reservation. This agitation has been sponsored by vested interests and is utterly destructive of national integration and social progress. The reactionary elements have tried to capitalise on the discontent that existed among a section of the students in regard to admission to post-graduate courses of medical studies. This might have been the immediate cause, but the subsequent unfolding of the agitation showed that the entire policy in regard to reservation is now under challenge. From post-graduate medical studies the protest spread to reservation in all educational institutions, and later, reservation in government services itself was questioned Some surviving members of the Constituent Assembly have even called for an end to reserved seats in the legislatures.

All this bodes ill for national unity and threatens to start a caste war. Already many lives have been lost, and if the authorities do not deal with the agitation skilfully and firmly it will spread to other parts of the country also Already there is a sense of insecurity among the harijans and the adivasis, and the backward classes, too, are nervous.

'However, this counter offensive against social equality is not a new phenomenon We witnessed the haughty reaction of the upper castes in Bihar three years ago, when the Karpoori Thakur government tried to redeem the promise made in the Janata party manifesto in 1977 about reservation for backward classes. There were arson, looting and burning of buses on a large scale. The ruling castes are not prepared to tolerate any infringement of their privileged status. What is infinitely saddening is the fact that such a movement should have arisen in a state which gave the nation the unique gift of Mahatma Gandhi. Gujarat today has become the graveyard of the ideals and hopes of the father of the nation.

Wrong economic policies, inflation, slow pace of economic development, shrinking employment opportunities, and continuing destruction of handicrafts and cottage industries due to large-scale factory production are all stoking the fires of discontent. Add to this the factional conflict within the Congress(I) in Gujarat and you have all the ingredients of an explosive situation. Inevitably, the weaker sections suffer. This is not surprising. In western countries, at present in the grip of an economic crisis also, the immigrants, the browns and the blacks are the targets of racial intolerance. We have no moral right to read lectures to others when we have failed to protect the weaker people of our own country.

Without the abolition of the caste system based on birth we can neither defend our national independence nor preserve our national unity. The democratic system which our country has adopted cannot be harmonised with the hierarchical social order. Any attempt to perpetuate the caste system will weaken the foundation of democracy Equality between man and man is the heart of democracy. The adoption of the principle of special opportunities and reservation, therefore, is inevitable if we want to remove the age-old injustice and end the oppression and exploitation of large sections of our population.

I do not maintain that the reservation system is ideal, nor does anyone want to make it permanent. But I must unambiguously state that the ideas and tests about merit, competitive selection and equal opportunities are bogus and irrelevant in an unequal society. The issue is whether we should continue the already existing system of vast and disproportionate reservation on the basis of birth and traditional social dominance (as also "reservation by the purse") or adopt a system of special opportunities and reservation for the socially backward and disadvantaged sections designed to raise these classes and establish social equality.

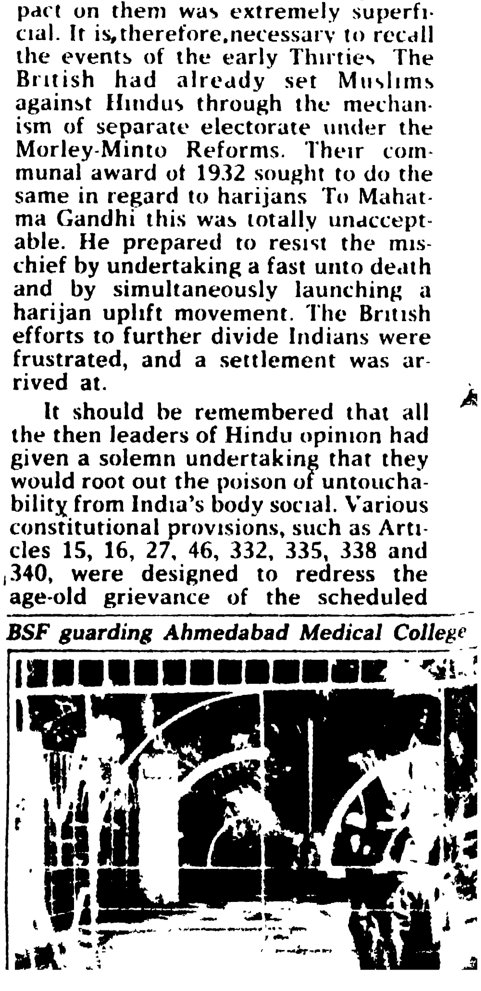
The poll manifesto of the undivided Janata party in 1977, and later the election platform of the Lok Dal (1979) had accepted the principle of reservation unequivocally. They had promised to reserve 25 to 30 per cent of government posts for backward class people. It is both unwise and immoral to wriggle out of this commitment.

Those who denounce reservation for harijans, adivasis and backward classes have always acquiesced in reservation based on traditional social dominance and money power. What else is the system of capitation fee? Many ministers, bureaucrats, businessmen and other powerful people have secured admission for their children from "public schools" upward by paying huge sums of money. These misguided students, who are venting their spleen on the weaker sections in Gujarat, never organised any movement against special schools and capitation fees. Do they not know that merit test is not applicable to those students whose rich parents can afford to make donations and pay large capitation fees?

I am astonished at the statement of the old Constituent Assembly members It is obvious that Gandhiji's impact on them was extremely superficial. It is, therefore, necessary to recall the events of the early Thirties The British had already set Muslims against Hindus through the mechanism of separate electorate under the Morley-Minto Reforms. Their communal award of 1932 sought to do the same in regard to harijans To Mahatma Gandhi this was totally unacceptable. He prepared to resist the mischief by undertaking a fast unto death and by simultaneously launching a harijan uplift movement. The British efforts to further divide Indians were frustrated, and a settlement was arrived at.

It should be remembered that all the then leaders of Hindu opinion had given a solemn undertaking that they would root out the poison of untouchability from India's body social. Various constitutional provisions, such as Articles 15, 16, 27, 46, 332, 335, 338 and 340, were designed to redress the age-old grievance of the scheduled

BSF guarding Ahmedabad Medical College



castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes. Now sinister attempts are under foot to reverse the course of national policy. Some of these attempts are crude and open. Others are masked and subtle. It is a subtle way of attacking the reservation policy to concede the principle of reservation and criticise its implementation.

It is argued that the reservation policy has not brought about any general improvement in the economic condition of these sections. But this is not the point at issue at all. The reservation policy was not adopted to improve their economic condition. To achieve economic progress we must get our priorities right We must have correct economic policies and appropriate development programmes The reservation policy was designed to raise their social status The entry into the legislatures and services of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes has certainly helped raise their status.

Then there is the argument about economic backwardness versus social backwardness. In micro terms,socially and educationally backward classes and economically backward classes overlap. Social policy cannot be framed on the basis of individual cases It is envy which exaggerates the "abuse of reservation safeguards" by a few well-to-do harijans. First of all,let me say that higher education presupposes a certain background, a certain favourable environment Upper caste people, no matter how poor, enjoy the advantage of favourable surroundings. It is not,therefore,surprising that children of only those harijans and adivasis who have slightly improved their economic condition are in a position to take advantage of those facilities. What is true of the scheduled castes and schuduled tribes is also true of backward artisan castes and farming communities, 70 per cent of whom are marginal and sub-marginal. For removing the hardships of poor upper caste youths other remedies must be adopted. This problem should not be mixed up with the reservation policy.

I would suggest an expanded system of reservation in terms of four broad categories. The social, educational, cultural (and even economic) condition of people falling in such category would be comparatively equal. Each category would get representation in services proportionate to their population. This would be just and equitable to all. Resentment is piling up among the kisan communities because quite a few of them are not considered backward and enjoy no protection whatever. Their anger is sought to be diverted by the upper castes against the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and against the reservation policy itself. Scheduled caste leaders must realise that if they don't make common cause with kisan communities, artisans and other backward castes irrespective of religion, their constitutional protection will soon come under attack and will not survive long. The kisan communities also must understand this game of dividing the kisans and harijans. My suggestions, therefore, are as under.

1. The first category would consist of the scheduled castes and tribes. These sections already enjoy constitutional protection. Their reservation should be continued.

2 In the second category should be placed all the backward communities, irrespective of religion Potters, smiths, carpenters, barbers, *telis*, *bhandaris*, *kevats*, Izhavas (Kerala), Nadars (Tamil Nadu), Muslim weavers, *darjees*, etc., Christian fishermen and so on will fall under this category. The list is only illustrative. The share of this category in services should be equal to their strength in the total population

3. In the third category should be placed groups which are generally known as kisan communities (but excluding those included in the fourth category) such as Reddy, Kamma, Velama (Andhra), Vakkaliga (Karnataka), Maratha, Lewa, Mali, Somavamshiya (Maharashtra), Yadav, Kurmi, Lodh, Jat, Gujar, Saini, Koyari, Barai (UP, Bihar, MP and Haryana), Khandayat (Orissa), Patidar (Gujarat), Gounder (Tamil Nadu), etc. Muslim farming groups will also fall under this category. The category's share should be proportionate to their population.

4. The last category should be confined to the upper castes, such as Brahmins, including Bhumihars, Kayasthas, Thakurs, Khatris, Jains, Parsees, Syrian Catholics and Muslim Shaikhs and Sayyads, etc. These groups are today over-represented in the services. Their quota should be restricted to their strength in the total population.

There should be competition and merit test only within each category and not between different categories.

I would further suggest that the above reservation scheme be supplemented by a definite policy decision to the effect that hereafter in gazetted services young people who have contracted or are willing to contract inter-caste marriages alone should be recruited. This would set in motion a new process of integration and bring about a radical change in the country's ethos. A constitutional amendment will be necessary to give effect to this policy. This should be done.

There are some well-meaning people who talk of equality of opportunity and merit test in the name of excellence and administrative efficiency. I ask why these people do not apply the same logic to import policy and foreign trade? Why not demolish the walls of import prohibitions, high custom duties and tariffs and let the internal market be flooded by efficiently and cheaply made foreign goods? Will any Indian industry survive foreign competition on application of merit test? If Indian industries need protection 34 years after freedom, how can we contest the claims of India's oppressed sections who have been unfairly treated for 3,000 years for protection and special treatment?

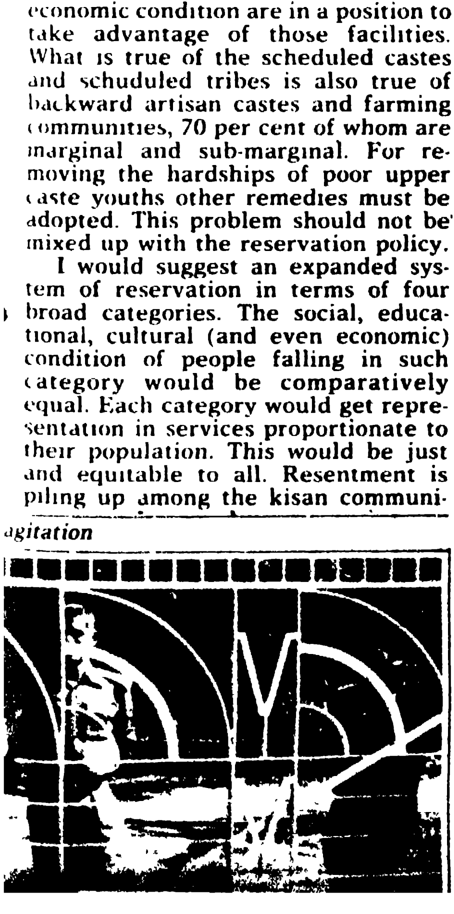
The argument about poverty is advanced by two sets of people; one set deliberately wants to sidetrack the issue of social inequality and discrimination based on birth The other set is well-intentioned and is concerned about genuine hardship cases involving poverty. I shall address myself to the second set only

I concede that these people are highlighting a genuine grievance. I would say that only the groups (in category four) which are over-represented in services in relation to their population (i e the forward communities) should be regarded fit for applying the additional test of economic backwardness. However, economic criteria cannot be applied to those categories and social groups which are getting much less than their due without doing them grave injustice. So I suggest that let the economic criteria be first applied to category four, which comprises the upper castes among the Hindus and advanced sections of the minorities. To those in this category who are economically well off I would say: leave government jobs to your poor brethren; you possess traditions, wealth and influence The private sector is very large and will continue to be large. These people have done well in this sector, and they will, I am sure, do still better if motivated to do so In the process, they will not only improve their own condition, they will also do good by generating employment for others.

Another aspect of inequality is the low status of women in our society. In each category special measures will have to be devised to remove the handicaps which women experience. Without sustained efforts their lot will not improve

It may be said that this plan will create fresh divisions within our society. This objection is superficial. Those who have a burning hatred for inequality and oppression will readily concede that we are not creating any new divisions. We are only taking note of the realities, and, while meeting the pressing requirements of equity and justice, are unleashing new forces of unity. This alone will enable us to create a society where there are no restrictions to who you sit down to eat with and whom you marry. Some may charge that this plan will divide Hindus, Muslims and Christians. My answer is that we must weaken the forces of communalism and unite all Indians. ■

agitation



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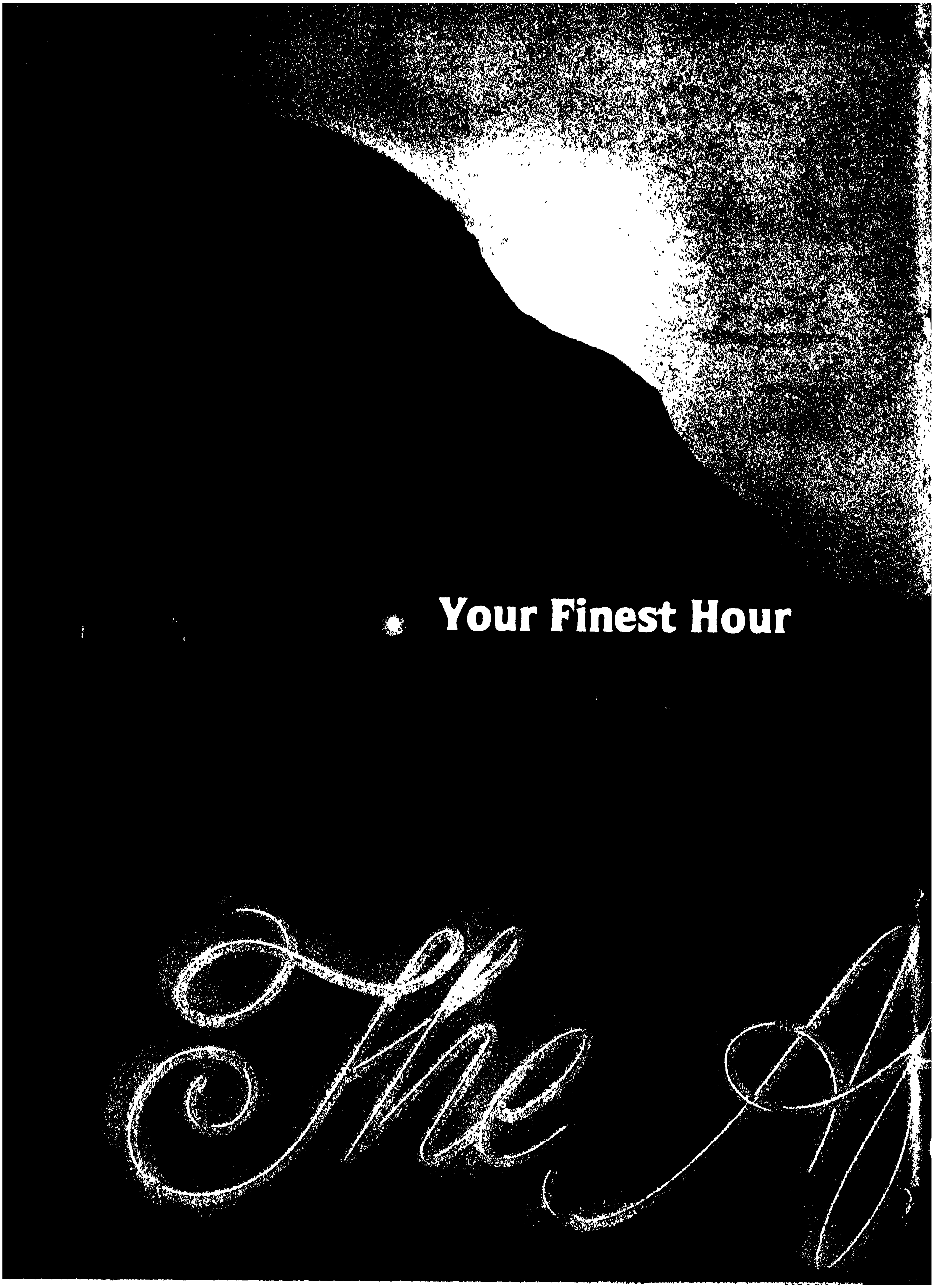
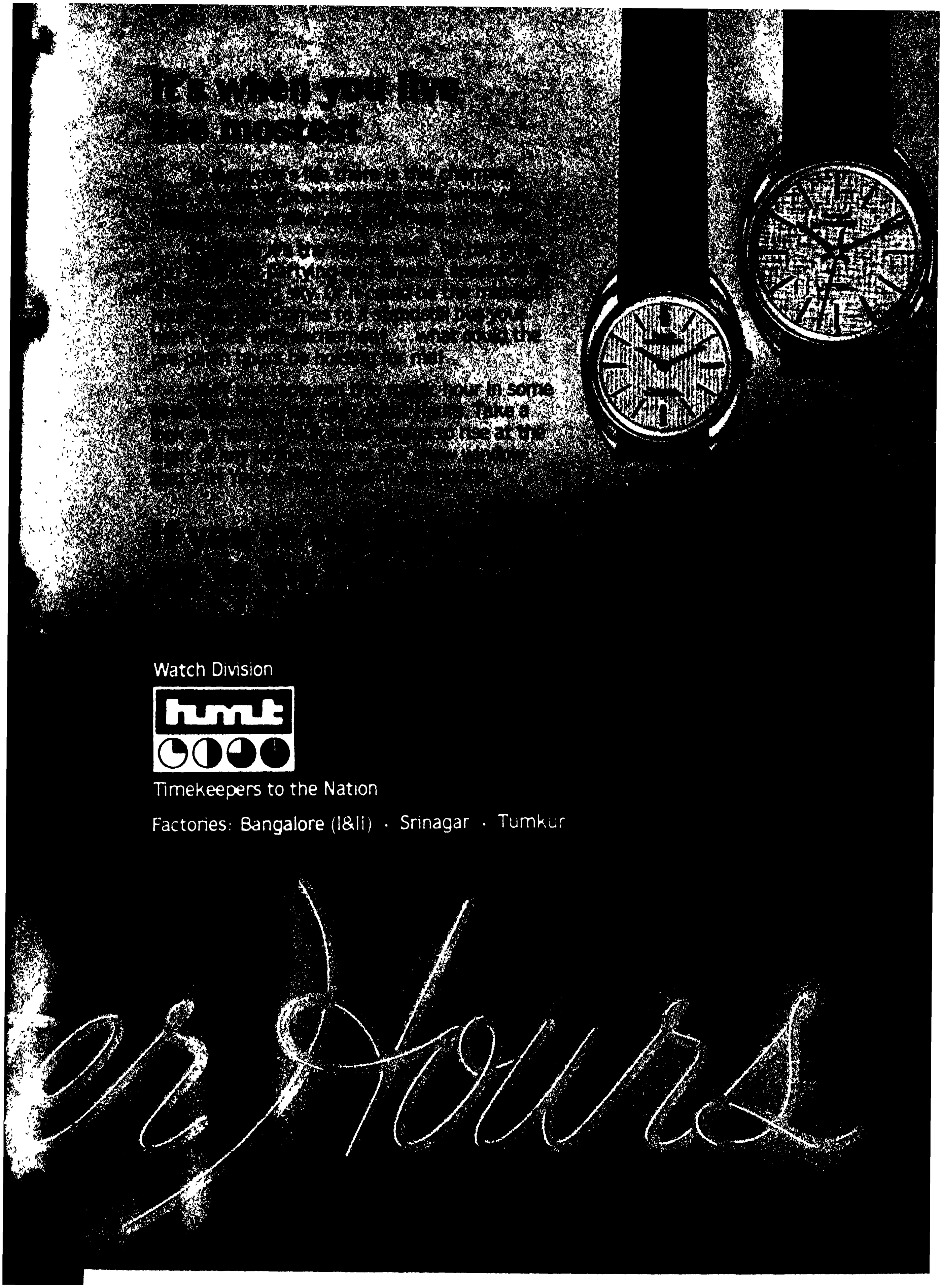


Your Finest Hour



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SREE DEVAN

GOODBYE GOA. COME IN, KOVALAM

By Binoo K. John

Gone are Goa's days of glory. Today's international jet-set pleasure spot is Kerala's still idyllic Kovalam beach. An ever-bright sun, dark grey sands and palm-lined fringes create a temptation too hard for both rich and poor tourists from all over the world to resist. The result is as pleasurable as the beach's beauty (see pictures).

The credit for making Kovalam what it is today, perhaps, should go to the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). Once ITDC realised the potentialities of the Trivandrum beach, the pure-sell copy began going out to holidayers the world over—especially in the West. They flocked in thousands, rich and poor alike. For, in Kovalam, one can have a good time for as little as Rs ten to Rs 1,000 every day.

Apart from the three or four months when bathing in the sea is

SWATHY

SWATHY

SREE DEVAN

SREE DEVAN

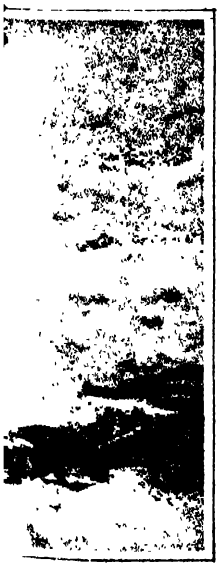
forbidden, the five-star Ashoka Hotel remains fully occupied. Even during the off-season, ITDC offers rooms at concessional rates to Indians for Rs 63 a room—a mouth-watering offer to many who find boarding rates in Kovalam prohibitive.

The Ashoka Hotel and the beach resort has been rated among the top 300 hotels in the world. While all other five-star hotels charge double rates in Kovalam, Ashoka Hotel still remains the cheapest. As the suave and debonair Mr Satish Babu, manager of the hotel, explained: "Our aim is not just commercial. We have also to promote tourism and thus earn foreign exchange."

It is a misconception that the beach resort caters only to foreigners. Said Mr Babu, "In fact, even during the peak season, November to May, the break-up is 50 per cent foreigners and 50 per cent Indians. I am trying to get as many Indian visitors as possible. A conference hall has been sanctioned and when that facility will be ready, we will be brimming even during the off-season."

Ashoka Hotel may be for the well-off—but they remain behind closed doors most of the time. A rope mesh has been strung along the whole beach to prevent oustsiders from entering the beach. The rich, however, do not make up most of the people who visit Kovalam, but common foreign tourists do These men and women move about freely in the nude, livening up proceedings. And the locals have made the best of the boom. They rent out part of their thatched huts and share food and beds with the "whites." Small restaurants with exotic names like "Velvet Dawn" and "Sun and Waves" have mushroomed to cushion the burgeoning tourist boom. Although, the more conservative among the local people frown on the activities of the foreigners, the more enterprising among them have made money by peddling drugs. This has only made Kovalam the ideal resort for pleasure-seekers and of course, voyeurs galore.

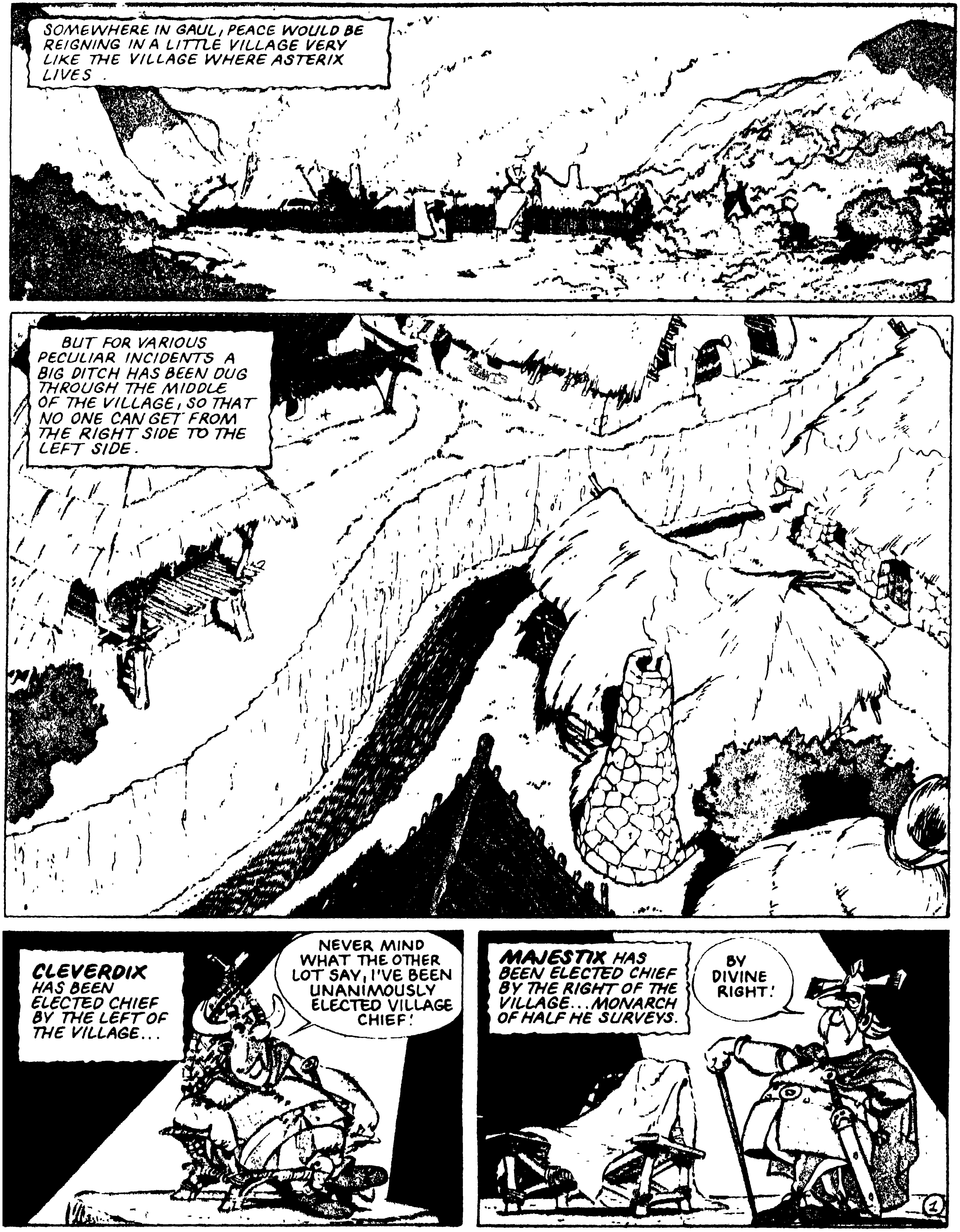
SREE DEVAN

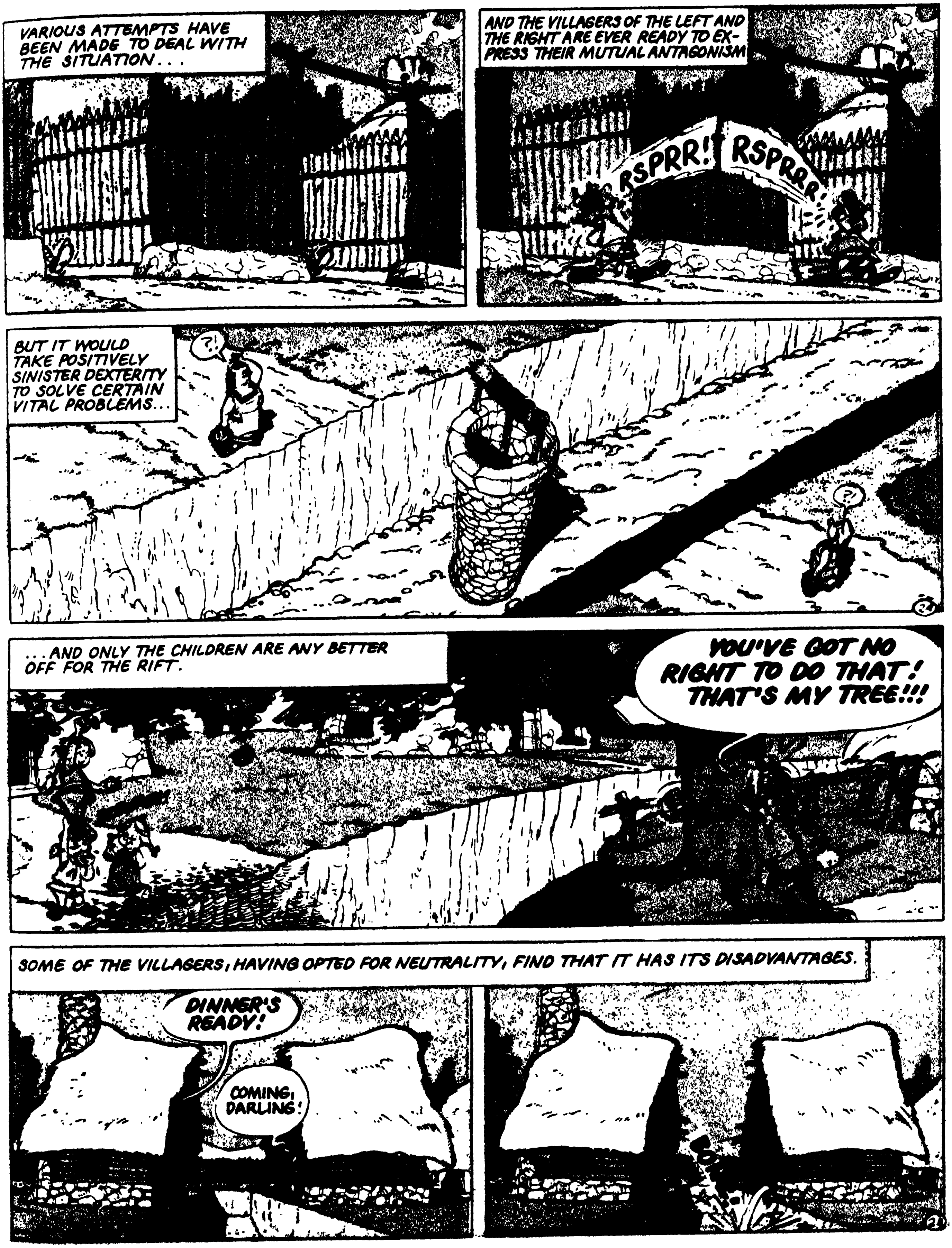


SREE DEVAN

Asterix AND THE GREAT DIVIDE

written and illustrated by UDERZO


SOMEWHERE IN GAUL, PEACE WOULD BE REIGNING IN A LITTLE VILLAGE VERY LIKE THE VILLAGE WHERE ASTERIX LIVES.
BUT FOR VARIOUS PECULIAR INCIDENTS A BIG DITCH HAS BEEN DUG THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THE VILLAGE, SO THAT NO ONE CAN GET FROM THE RIGHT SIDE TO THE LEFT SIDE.
CLEVERDIX HAS BEEN ELECTED CHIEF BY THE LEFT OF THE VILLAGE...
NEVER MIND WHAT THE OTHER LOT SAY, I'VE BEEN UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED VILLAGE CHIEF!
MAJESTIX HAS BEEN ELECTED CHIEF BY THE RIGHT OF THE VILLAGE... MONARCH OF HALF HE SURVEYS.
BY DIVINE RIGHT!
1


VARIOUS ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION...
AND THE VILLAGERS OF THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT ARE EVER READY TO EXPRESS THEIR MUTUAL ANTAGONISM
RSPRR!
RSPRRR!
BUT IT WOULD TAKE POSITIVELY SINISTER DEXTERITY TO SOLVE CERTAIN VITAL PROBLEMS...
?!
?!
...AND ONLY THE CHILDREN ARE ANY BETTER OFF FOR THE RIFT.
YOU'VE GOT NO RIGHT TO DO THAT! THAT'S MY TREE!!!
SOME OF THE VILLAGERS, HAVING OPTED FOR NEUTRALITY, FIND THAT IT HAS ITS DISADVANTAGES.
DINNER'S READY!
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SURYODAYA/JK/281/8

THE WORLD

Briefly

Loren at a loss

Sometime ago, the Italian government ordered a raid on actress Sophia Loren's sprawling villa and seized a number of paintings and other valuable works of art This booty, according to Italian finance ministry sources, will soon be auctioned to recover part of the income tax debt owed by the actress and her husband, Carlo Ponti, to the government.

No sex for a decade

The world's longest running comedy, *No sex please—we are British*, celebrates its 10th anniversary at Strand Theatre in London on 4 June this year

Spy is honoured

Richard Sorge, who operated as a Russian spy in Japan from 1933 to '41, warned Moscow of Hitler's invasion and was subsequently captured and executed by the Japanese, has been honoured by the Soviets with a Moscow street named after him and a special postage stamp And recently, a monument dedicated to him was unveiled at Baku in the republic of Azerbaijan where Sorge had spent his childhood.

Backseat driver

"Make sure you have your keys," says a petulant female voice to the driver leaving his driving seat The peevish voice comes from a computerised backseat-driver gadget invented by a Japanese car manufacturer Among the computer's other duties, it scolds motorists if they violate driving rules.

Rags to riches

Tom Gray (55) had been jobless for eight months and was living on a £30-a-week government dole before he was elected mayor of Peterborough (England) in May this year He is now entitled to a chauffeur-driven limousine, a monthly allowance of £3,000 and an unlimited number of lunches and dinners at functions

State of US secretary

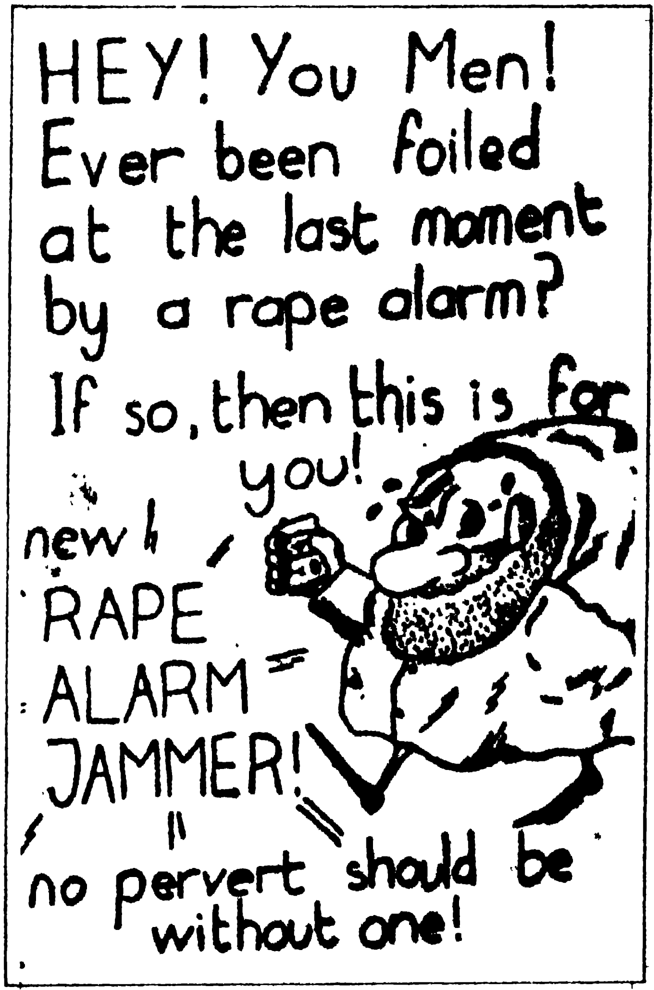
Even before US secretary of state Alexander Haig went to Syracuse University in New York to receive his honorary doctorate recently, the signs were ominous: Sir Moses Finley, professor of ancient history and master of Darwin College, Cambridge, who was also to receive a Syracuse University degree, refused to attend the ceremony because he felt that his presence would suggest support for Mr Haig's foreign policy. As things turned out, it was Haig's foreign policy which caused the trouble. The 18,000 students of the university showed considerable initial tolerance when they sat through a good part of Mr Haig's speech on the "spiritual exhaustion" of the Soviet people who now face "an extremely gloomy future." Mr Haig contended, "a state as powerful and ambitious as the Soviet Union may be more dangerous because its weaknesses run to the heart of its system." Getting finally to the point, Mr Haig declared that the "first task" of the American leadership and NATO was to "establish new restraints on Soviet behaviour " That did it Almost 100 students staged a prompt walkout. Others tried to heckle and interrupt his speech and soon fistfights had broken out in the auditorium. The situation was eventually brought under control by the police.

Nipped in the bud

A Saudi Arabian businessman, Muhammad, is taken to a flat in London which he assumes to be a brothel; two buxom women get him drunk on orange juice punched with whisky and then he is subjected to a torrent of anti-Arab abuse

That is a scene from *Goose Pimples*—the play by a group called Robert Fox Organisation which opened at Garrick Theatre in London and almost raised a storm similar to the one by ITV's drama documentary *Death of a Princess* a few months ago. Dr Syed Aziz Pasha, general secretary of the union of Muslim organisations in Britain, promptly sent a letter to the play's director Mike Leigh demanding the removal of the offending scene. "Adultery and alcohol," he claimed, "are strictly forbidden by Muslim law. This scene is trying to deprave and corrupt the morals of Muslims in this country " He threatened to appeal to the home secretary if the scene was not removed. But before a public protest could snowball both in Britain and Saudi Arabia, the foreign office intervened: two officials saw the play, collected copies of its script and press reviews and, according to a member of the Robert Fox Organisation, sent them to the British ambassador in Saudi Arabia to help him establish the innocence of the play

A bit of wit


HEY! You Men!
Ever been foiled
at the last moment
by a rape alarm?
If so, then this is for
you!
new !
'RAPE
ALARM
JAMMER!'
no pervert should be
without one!

This photograph is of a poster spotted a few weeks ago at London University

KHAAS BAAT

Rameshwari. coming in from the cold?

Superstition rules high in the filmy circles and the latest to come under the spell is *Yash Chopra*. It seems that whenever he tries to make two films whose titles begin with the same alphabet, one of them turns out to be a superhit and the other a flop. Good instances are, ***Daag*** and ***Doosara***, ***Kabhie Kabhie*** **and** ***Kaala Patthar***, ***Noorie*** and ***Nakhuda***. Now another pair has been added to the list: *Sawaal* and *Silsila*. Not surprisingly, everyone in the industry is keeping his fingers crossed over the future of the two films.

For several years now, *Sanjeev Kumar* and *Dharmendra* have been avoiding each other studiously. Reason: *Hema*, of course. The actress was supposed to have married Sanjeev Kumar, and when that did not come off, the tension began. Now, a second person has unwittingly become the victim of misunderstanding—*Jeetendra*. Hema, is responsible once again. The actress had fallen out with Jeetendra and had managed to convince Dharam that Jeetendra had better be kept at arm's length. So, despite the fact that Jeetendra is all respect and praise for Dharam, the ever-pleasant Jeetendra has to put up with coldness from both Dharam and Hema.

Rajesh Khanna seems to have undergone a change of heart. Gone are the days of uneasy tension, when the star threw his weight around and pushed people lesser than himself out of his films to bring in his own men. Rajesh is now a simple-minded and easy-going star, who is not at all anxious to regain his past glory—not that he will succeed even if he tries his best! And what caused the change? For one thing, the tension that he had to go through when *Dimple* threatened to drag him to court, has lifted. More, Rajesh is feeling rather smug about the idea that he has succeeded in keeping his wife away from films although she was rather keen on getting back to the movies. However, the ex-superstar, is at the moment rather busy flirting with and promoting the career of *Jayapradha*. One wonders whether all the hmility will last if and when the gamble pays off.

Dev Anand

Rajesh Khanna

Jeetendra. cold treatment for the do-gooder

Padmini: Dev's new girl

Why are producers suddenly wanting to sign up *Rameshwari*. The sudden interest is indeed surprising, specially in view of the fact that after her accident, producers were giving the star the brush-off, despite her success in *Aasha*. However, looks like things are at last brightening up for the star, thanks to *Jeetendra*. The grapevine has it that Jeetendra, who works with Rameshwari in *Sharada*, and liked her performance in *Aasha*, has gone around recommending her name to people who matter. For Rameshwari who has the talents, this might mean a lucky break. Finally, we might see the girl get her long-overdue share of success.

These days *Dev Anand* is busy with none other than *Padmini Kohlapure*. Dev is doing his best to promote the girl's career, and how. One cannot help remembering Dev's earlier enthusiasm for *Tina Munim* and before that *Zeenat Aman*. Of course, both these stars have fallen out with Dev: Zeenat with her entry into *RK* films and as for Tina, though Dev's move will come as a shock to her, she has long ceased to be a *Nav Ketan* star. Strangely, the fact that Padmini had played the role of baby Zeenat in *Satyam*, has not prevented Dev from pushing the girl's career. And why not? To set the record straight, Padmini herself has been announcing that she was first cast in Dev's *Ishk Ishk Ishk*, before she was given the big role in *Raj Kapoor's Satyam*. ■

KHAAS BAAT

DURGAPRASAD

Kamalahasan

When *Kamalahasan's Raja Parvai*—inspired by *Butterflies are free* and *The Graduate*, which by themselves made it an interesting film—opened to packed houses, the producer was hardly excited. And he had good reasons. The distributors had called his film a 'class film' and were apprehensive that the film would not be popular in the districts. Well, their predictions turned out to be true, and the film is a hit only in the city of Madras.

Komilla Wirk is going south. The only reason for her sojourn is to bare herself. And why not? *Simple Kapadia, Aruna Irani* and few more are doing sizzling roles in southern films, and not without success. So there is really no reason why Komilla Wirk shouldn't try her hand on the silver screen of the south. However, there is only one snag: Komilla is denying the story of moving to the south with vehemence. Apparently, she wants to wait for a miracle to happen in Bombay, so she will not have to move elsewhere.

Despite vehement protests by her father, *Rathi Devi* decided to give some deadly exposures to a photographer, recently. There are only two conditions that the photographer has to fulfil. First, he will have to find a hotel room in which to take the photographs and secondly, he will have to find a Bombay magazine that will publish the photographs of Rathi Devi. Well, since neither of the two conditions are very difficult to fulfil, let's hope we will soon see some sizzling photographs of Rathi.

SHYAM AURANGABADKAR

Komilla Wrik: waiting for a break

Rathi Devi: some exposure

Rati Agnihotri is keen on not severing her connections with the south. Not only has she said that she won't forget the south which made her a big star, but that she will accept good roles in Madras-made films. True to her words, Rati signed in two Madras made films. But both are in Hindi and are remakes of hit films made in Tamil and Telugu. One of them is for *AVM* and the other for *Vauhini's B. Nagi Reddy,* which will probably star *Sanjeev Kumar.*

Towards the end of 1979, so the story goes, *MGR* offered bulk dates to whoever was wiling to make a quick movie which was to be released before the polls. Apparently, *MGR* wanted to make a Tamil version of *Roti, Kapda aur Makaan.* But producers slipped out of the deal.

PIOUSJI

Mitterrand:Victory after 23 years

Madhu Jain reports from Paris

The cynical journalist, as Parisian journalists tend to be, put out his Gaulloise and bent down towards me: "You know, I won't dare tell anyone else. But you are Indian and will go away. You know I just went to a corner and cried, the tears kept pouring down... I am so happy, it is all so unexpected."

We were at the Bastille. It was ten in the evening—two hours after Francois Mitterrand had been declared President with a runaway majority at 52.24%. Fireworks rent open the cold, dark sky over the Bastille. The crowd surged forward like a drunken elephant. Everyone burst into song and hugged each other or danced. It was plain and simple euphoria. The Left had come to power after 23 years.

For many of those present, it was 1968 revisited. Most of them were young. A few had even brought their children and babies along on this night when history turned a page in France. And for a few—there were a few old people—it was 1936 all over again when the popular Front and Leon Blum was born.

The euphoria was certainly contagious. A Pakistani girl, standing near the speedily put up platform in front of the Bastille, came across and hugged me. Pop stars sang. The Communists for that night at least forgot their differences with the Socialists who had come to power and cheered for Mitterrand not forgetting to add that they wanted Communist ministers in the new government Homosexuals put up green and pink banners demanding a change in the law forbidding homosexuality before the age of 18. It was a free for all. Earlier, champagne had flowed freely at the Socialist Party's headquarters at Rue Solferino when reticence was in bad taste.

Horns must have resounded in Paris after 25 years of being banned. People emptied out into the streets The "V" sign for victory could be seen everywhere. The police, normally quite grim in this city of revolutions, had been told by the present incumbents not to interrupt the manifestations of *joie* even if people began, as they did, to paint the walls.

Francois Mitterrand campaigning

It was the victory of Red France (the Socialist Party's sign is a red rose, no less) over traditional conservative Blue France. Something basic has changed. Francois Mitterrand (64) in his fourth attempt to become President has, of course, succeeded in getting the entire Left behind him, including the Communists even though the Union of the Left was split in 1977. But, he had also got the votes of a certain section of the Right, who weary after seven years of Giscard d'Estaing (56) wanted a change.

Traditionally, France has been split in two. Giscard in 1974, barely scraped by with 0.3% more than Mitterrand. The additional two per cent is of tantamount significance. It can allow the new President to make profound changes, for the youth, workers, and a new order, as he has never ceased to say during the course of his campaign.

But the battle is only three-quarters won. Mitterrand has dissolved the Parliament and called for legislative elections in June. In the French Parliament, elected only three years ago, the Right has a majority of 274 seats (155 of which belong to Jacques Chirac's party, the RPR). The Socialists have only 117. The Communists, led by George Marchais, 86.

No wonder then that the new President in a sombre blue suit and cream shirt, appeared quite restrained in his television broadcast to the public after the election results were declared. With the Left in power after over two decades, hopes run high. Those who have waited so long are impatient for change. Those who are not so impatient are cynical.

Some of the euphoria did wear off the following day: the taxi drivers and grocers I spoke to had, in their vote, for Mitterrand expressed their desire for change—but were sure that it was not around the corner. It was the wait-and-see reaction. In fact, a few truck drivers wanted to take back their vote when they realised that the 36-hour work week promised by Mitterrand was not for another six years.

In his campaign speeches after the first round of elections in which he got 26% of the votes to Giscard's 28%, Mitterrand did not stress any radical aspects of his programmes. It was perhaps his restrained campaigning (his attacks were mainly confined to unemployment and inflation: there are 1,700,000 unemployed, and 13% inflation) which captured some of the Gaullist votes and those of small traders.

Two important conclusions emerge from the French Presidential elections. First, the Communists' wings have been clipped. For the first time since 1936 has their popularity fallen so low. George Marchais, in the first round of the elections only got 15% of the votes—it was 20% last time. With a weakened Communist party, Mitterrand might try to go it alone and get a Socialist majority.

He certainly has better bargaining

position with them even though, Marchais in his televised declaration soon after the results were declared said that the Communists "were ready to assume their responsibilities at all levels." In plain language that meant: we gave you our votes, now you give us some ministerial posts.

Secondly, it is Jacques Chirac, Giscard's former bulldozer-like prime minister and it seems, arch enemy who emerges as the new man of the Right. In his television appearance after the results were declared, Chirac (who got an amazing 18% in the first round) announced gravely that France had entered into a "phase of uncertitude and danger" and asked people to continue the combat.

Giscard hasn't yet closed shop though. He preempted Chirac's speech by half an hour when he, on television as well, said that he "would continue to defend the essential interests of our country."

Some of the former President's supporters feel that Chirac stabbed Giscard in the back by only paying lip-service to him. During the Presidential campaign, the main target of this dynamic mayor of Paris was, in fact, Giscard. After the first round, all he said was: "In my personal capacity I will vote for Giscard." The enthusiasm was missing. Nor did the Gaullist former premier look too unhappy after Mitterrandwon. It makes it easier for him the next time round with Giscard out of the way. Most people believe that these elections have brought the curtains down on him since he does not have a large base.

Why did Giscard lose? For a President for whom opinion polls, (which as it turns out are uncannily accurate: a poll four days before the elections was less than 0.2% off) gave him a majority of 60%, it has been some fall from the state of *grace*.

Valery Giscard d'Estaing

Many believe it was his lack of ease with the people, his hauteur and arrogance which increasingly isolated him from the people. The story of the diamonds given to the "Sultan President" by Bokassa of Central Africa must also have alienated a few people. But, it was more the style of the man that did him in. Arrogance before fall.

There was hubris in his character. He did finally descend from the Olympian Elysee heights, but perhaps, he went too low. Recently his campaign had become quite aggressive. He kept raising the bogey of the Communists accusingMitterrandof being a prisoner of the latter. It was this fear of the Communists that he tried to instil in very unsubtle ways that lost him some of his following. It was a really *apres moi, le deluge* kind of campaign.

Mitterrand, on the other hand, remains distant and dignified—his early Gaullist training showing up. He has been in politics for a long time and was always a man of the Left. He was 11 times minister in the Fourth Republic. Later, he took a hard line against Algeria. In 1958, when Charles De Gaulle founded the Fifth Republic, Mitterrand fell out with *grand Charles* and veered to the Left. Eventually, the battle would have been between the Gaullists and the Left.

As far as India is concerned, with whom France's trade relations are considerably increasing, Mitterrand's government might be well disposed.Mitterand has consistently said, that the Third World should be given more aid—from 0.3% to 0.7% of the GNP. He has also said that he is against the neutron bomb and would like to decrease the sale of arms abroad—but the sale of arms is too important a part of France's economy to allowMitterrand to really do something about it. Mitterrand would also like to change France's foreign policy towards Africa and renegotiate the Atlantic alliance.

If the Socialists form an united front with the Communists, the differences in foreign policies and economic matters would be quite formidable. Mitterrandis quite vocal, against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Communists have not said much and Mitterrand was even critical of Giscard's Warsaw meeting with Brezhnev after the invasion. Poland will prove a tricky matter. ■

Francois Mitterrand being greeted by fans and supporters after his election as President of France on 10 May

Congress:Can "U" and "I" come together?

Negotiations are on in earnest

New Delhi: The section of the Congressmen who are in the opposition today because they did not attend the rebel conference convened by Mrs Indira Gandhi on 1 January 1978 (when she launched a party which bore her name in the suffix), are in a dilemma. The Congress(Urs), as the opposition faction of the 96-year-old Indian National Congress is referred to today, is unable to decide whether it should maintain its identity in the opposition ranks or merge with Mrs Gandhi's party. For leaders like Yashwantrao Chavan, Jagjivan Ram, Dev Kanta Barooah, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Bali Ram Bhagat, Tarakeshwari Sinha and even younger people like Priya Ranjan Das Munshi of West Bengal and P. C. Chacko and Vylar Ravi of Kerala, the last 18 months of opposition while there is a Congress government at the centre, seems to be particularly unbearable. Apart from the brief period following the 1977 defeat, Congressmen have never been accustomed to a life of opposition politics. Therefore, the only surprise is that the groundswell for merger has begun now, and not earlier.

However, there remains a section in the Congress(U), comprising younger elements like Sharad Pawar, A. K. Anthony, Dharambir Sinha, K. P. Unnikrishnan, Margaret Alva, Ambika Soni and V. K. Kishore Deo who would not like to surrender to Mrs Gandhi, and would prefer, at least for the time being, to continue in the opposition and seek a dialogue on unity with former Congress leaders like Chandra Shekhar, H. N. Bahuguna and Chandrajit Yadav, who are all in different parties today. It is this section which prevailed in mid-May, when there were fervent attempts by some senior leaders, notably Y. B. Chavan, to cross over to Mrs Gandhi's fold.

On 15 and 16 May, there was hectic politicking in the otherwise sleepy Congress(U) camp. Newsmen, who usually pass by the AICC(U) office on Raisina Road without even bothering to turn their heads and read the signboard, were occupying every nook and corner of the office, looking for scoops about possible defections. On 15 May, the West Bengal unit president, P. R. Das Munshi, was in town. That morning's dailies had carried lead stories about an expected exodus from the party, led by Y. B. Chavan. Mr Das Munshi went around the residences of his party leaders during the day, and even called on H. N. Bahuguna of the Democratic Socialist Front. But significantly, he rounded up his day with a dinner at the residence of union commerce minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee. Mr Das Munshi claims he is not eager to join the Congress(I) immediately, but wants to work in cooperation with that party in opposing the CPI(M)-led Left Front government in West Bengal. The Congress(I) leaders too find this sort of an arrangement comfortable—they have Mr Das Munshi and his group of young activists on their side and yet not competing for power inside their party.

Devaraj Urs

P. R. Das Munshi

One thing has, of course, to be said about Mr Das Munshi. He tried his level best to get along with the Left Front all these years, right from 1978, but his overtures were repeatedly spurned by the leftists, particularly the CPI(M). The decision of the CPI(M) to abstain from voting against the Anowara Taimur ministry in the no-confidence motion in Assam was also taken as an affront by the Congress(U) men in the east—West Bengal's Mr Das Munshi and Assam's Mr Sarat Chandra Sinha. So, Mr Das Munshi is aligning with the Congress(I) today with the tacit approval of his party's central leadership.

The next day, on 16 May, Mr Sharad Pawar came in from Bombay by the early morning flight. His mission to Delhi was to meet his old mentor, Y. B. Chavan, and clearly ask him where the latter stood. Mr Das Munshi, who was to leave by a later flight to Calcutta, met Mr Pawar at Delhi airport's VIP lounge and the two conferred for half an hour. Mr Pawar later told this reporter that he approved of Mr Das Munshi's tactical line (see interview). Also present at the airport were around 50 Youth Congress(U) volunteers led by general secretary, Prem Nayyar, who received Mr Pawar and urged him not to join the Congress(I).

From the airport, Mr Pawar drove straight to Mr Y. B. Chavan's house, where he spoke to the senior Maratha leader for over two hours and convinced him of the need to defer his decision to defect. Mr Chavan wanted an urgent meeting of the working committee to discuss the issue of merger. Mr Pawar told him that the leaders' camp of the party, scheduled to be held in Bangalore in July, could be the appropriate forum for such a discussion. This camp may now be held in June, after the by-elections, in view of Mr Chavan's stand.

Later, Mr Pawar conferred with party general secretaries K. P. Unnikrishnan, Ambika Soni and Dharambir Sinha, secretary of the Congress Parliamentary party, for over two hours at the Maharashtra Sadan on Copernicus Marg. He also met Banka Behari Das and Tarakeshwari Sinha. The consensus was that the party should not go the Chavan way and differences should be sorted out at the Bangalore meeting.

Mr Sharad Pawar's eight-hour stay in the capital (he returned by the evening flight) has been able to stall the defection of Mr Y. B. Chavan. But the question is, for how long? Hardly three days later, on 19 May, Y. B. Chavan had a significant meeting with Mrs Gandhi. The Congress(U) is not a powerful party today, with small pockets of influence restricted to Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. In fact, in the last three named states, the party has its best base, which reduces it more or less to be a west coast party. But if Mr Bahuguna, Mr Chandrajit Yadav and Mr Raj Narain can have their independent existence in the opposition, why can't Mr Pawar and Mr Anthony, the anti-mergerists argue.

Tailpiece: The AICC president of the Emergency days, Mr Dev Kanta Barooah, who was credited with coining the slogan "India is Indira and Indira is India," was a busy man on 15 May after the press reports about Mr Chavan's possible defection appeared. He went from house to house, meeting Congress(U) leaders. His purpose was two-fold. One, he told all partymen he met, that Mr Chavan was going because he had been assured that he would succeed Mr Neelam Sanjiva Reddy at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in 1982. Two, he wanted to know if Mr Chavan was the only man whom Mrs Gandhi wanted. Another man who was keen to know this was Babu Jagjivan Ram. He even cited instances in the past year when Mrs Gandhi's emissaries had gone to him and asked him to cross the floor. But he wanted her to approach him directly, he told some of the people who called on him.

Our Delhi Correspondent

CONGRESS(U)

Chavan-Pawar: the phoney war

Bombay: They sound like famous last words. Mr Rajni Patel: "I will abide by the decision of the Congress(U) working committee unless it is against my conscience." Mr Sharad Pawar (silent most of the time about this issue, but this is what he said when he spoke): "As president of the MPCC(U) I cannot commit myself publicly on the issue. Members could express their views freely at the meeting on Monday." Mr Suresh Kalmadi, president of All India Youth Congress(U) while protesting loudly that the entire youth wing of Congress(U) is opposed to the move of merging the Congress(U) with the Congress(I): "The decision in this respect should be taken on a national level. If the decision is taken locally it is defection," meaning thereby that he too would abide by the decision of the working committee. Besides, his only grouse seems to be, "see what has happened to Brahmananda Reddy, Swaran Singh, Bahuguna." All this means only one thing; that they are all mentally prepared to join the Congress(I), it is only the method or style of effecting the capitulation that is in dispute. The talk of conscience, etc. is a worn out figleaf

Congress culture, whether of the (U) or (I) variety, is flexible enough to

SHARAD PAWAR

I don't think any of our senior leaders want to join the Congress(I)

Our correspondent spoke to Mr Sharad Pawar on 16 May in Maharashtra Sadan, Delhi. Excerpts from the interview:

Q: There have been reports in the national press during the last two days that you are on the verge of joining the Congress(I). How far are they true?

A: These reports are baseless. They are incorrect. Definitely in the last meeting of our working committee there was a demand by one of my colleagues, Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi immediately after the by-elections in June we should convene a meeting of the working committee members, PCC chiefs and other senior leaders and take stock of the political situation and decide about our future actions. But that was all. There was no talk of going to the Congress(I).

Q: You met your old associate, Mr Yashwantrao Chavan, this morning and had a long talk. Is he going to defect to the Congress(I)? If so, what will be the impact of the split between you and Mr Y. B. Chavan on Maharashtra politics?

A: I don't think there will be any split between me and Chavan. At least on the state level my party is one. And definitely Mr Chavan is the seniormost leader who always guides us and I don't think he will take any decision on a personal level, without consulting us. It's true that he wants us to discuss certain major issues and there is nothing wrong if he wants to discuss all these issues in the working committee. Mr Chavan has always respected collective thinking.

Q: Why do you want to continue in the Congress(U)?

A: What is Congress(I) and Congress(U)? I have been in the Congress since my childhood. I have never left the Congress. I want to continue in my party because I believe in the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Q: In your party, you have emerged as the leader of the younger group who seem determined to continue in the opposition. Against this, there are certain older people who are itching to cross over to the Congress(I). How do you react to the moves of the older leaders?

A: Our party is not very strong organisationally all over the country today, so I would not like to associate myself with groupism. I don't think any of our senior leaders wants to join the Congress(I). Everybody is eager to strengthen this party.

Q: Have you been approached by the Congress(I) to join that party?

A: No, that's not correct. I read in a newspaper that I have been approached or that I had a meeting with Mr Rajiv Gandhi. I have not met him. Even if I have met him, why should I hide it? If I politically disagree with someone, is there anything wrong in meeting him?

Q: How do you react to the line of your West Bengal unit, of an alliance with the Congress(I) against the ruling Left Front?

A: You see, in West Bengal our colleagues are facing some problems from the CPI(M). In fact we never expected this sort of attitude from the Marxists towards another opposition party. Unfortunately the ruling party in West Bengal is not willing to directly or indirectly associate itself with our party. Their overall approach is to create problems for our party, which is headed by Mr Das Munshi. So, certainly, in our overall approach, we have to take into account primarily the interests of our own unit in that state.

Q: Considering that a new scenario is emerging in Indian politics with Mr Rajiv Gandhi coming out openly, what steps are you contemplating as an opposition leader to unite other like-minded forces and oppose the imposition of dynastic rule?

A: What is the significance of Mr Rajiv Gandhi? It is all right that as an individual he is contesting on behalf of the ruling party, why should we take a special cognizance of him? I don't think that it (Rajiv's coming into politics) is an important development. It may be an important development for the ruling party, but certainly not for us.

Q: What prospects do you see of opposition unity?

A: I would have been the happiest if during these by-elections the opposition could have come together and put up joint candidates. It's most unfortunate that the opposition have not learnt the lessons from past mistakes. In a democratic setup the people do definitely expect a strong opposition, but by the division the ruling party is being helped.

Q: But as the leader of a young group of opposition politicians you certainly can play a role...

A: Yes, but what can we do when especially in northern India some of the important opposition parties are controlled by old men who just refuse to listen to the voice of the younger people? Had they been listening to us, then the politics in the country today could have taken a much different shape.

give Congressmen several options. It may be recalled that in 1978, Sharad Pawar, then as now protege of Mr Y. B. Chavan, had come back with the then chief minister of Maharashtra, Vasantdada Patil, from Delhi. Both were on the same plane and both had come from a meeting in Delhi where it was decided that all Congressmen would abide by the decision of the Swaran Singh Congress, as it was then called. When Mr Pawar got down from the plane he drove straight to Mr S. M. Joshi's house and from there to the Assembly which was in session, and crossed the floor with 58 legislators to assume leadership of the Janata-dominated Progressive Democratic Front government (as it was christened later). Dada was literally in tears as his throne was snatched from right under him, and an enraged Mr Rajni Patel called Mr Sharad Pawar a "traitor" in front of journalists. However, while Dada still carries his hatred for Mr Pawar as a heavy chip on his shoulder, Mr Rajni Patel within a week became best of friends with Pawar and throughout Pawar's career as chief minister there were never two people who were thicker friends. Mr Y. B. Chavan was ignored as Sharad Pawar odapted to the culture of his irrepressible, brilliant politician-cum-lawyer mentor and became a past master in manipulative politics.

In this context, the "war" between Mr Chavan and Mr Pawar that is being reported is as phoney as can be. If Mr Pawar is at all disturbed by Mr Chavan it is for trying to jump the gun in order to grab any crumbs that might be offered. Mr Pawar has been trying desperately to effect an equitable relationship with Mrs Gandhi, and hoped to achieve it by becoming president of the Congress(U). But this has been sabotaged by the suave manipulator Devaraj Urs, who has reduced this ambition to a pipedream.

The rank and file Congressmen, who enjoy more or less the status of sheep, are all for joining the "mainstream" of the Congress as represented by the Congress(I). They feel that the induction of Mr Rajiv Gandhi will bring about a sea-change and, in any case, there was never a big divide on important issues between the two Congress parties. It was only the Congress(U) leaders who stood on prestige which, in politics, does not have any sustaining power. And, as Mr Suresh Kalmadi said very precisely, "Our people cannot remain out of power for a long time." It has been between one to three years for most of them, which is a terribly long time, considering that most of the leaders are above 60. Hence the hurry among the old and the go-slowly, but-surely, attitude of the younger politicians led by Mr Pawar and Mr Anthony.

Mr Chavan's current misery can be guaged from the fact that even a college named after him in his hometown, Khatar, in his heyday was in May rechristened after Shahajiraje Bhosle, father of Chhatrapati Shivaji. Mr Babasaheb Bhosle, the law minister, objected to this change but he was overruled by Mrs Shalinitai Patil, the revenue minister.

MUKESH PARPIANI

Sharad Pawar

Meanwhile, the person enjoying himself most is chief minister A. R. Antulay. He added to the confusion by saying that merger was imminent, and when asked to clarify said that he took the cue from Sharad Pawar's speech in Pune. Mr Pawar had reportedly said that in future there would be only one Congress.

The rank and file of the Congress(I) in Maharashtra, as also the general secretary of the AICC(I) Mr Vasantdada Patil, are furious. Vasantdada, who is soon taking to "constructive" work, will be eclipsed by Pawar and this is precisely the intention of Mr Antulay, who sees Dada as a threat to his position. The rank and file feel that despite being "loyalists" they will be ignored when the "outsiders" come and throw their weight around. They are rallying their forces to express their displeasure at the possible *en masse* entry of the Congress(U) into their party.

Olga Tellis

PROTEST

Cho's stamp of dismissal

Madras: Cho Ramaswamy is never short of ideas. Soon the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is going to receive a form designed and written by Cho Ramaswamy, editor of the widely circulated Tamil fortnightly, *Thuglak*. The form should be handed over to the CBI witnesses in the future, says Cho, along with the usual form which withnesses sign. Cho's form will read something like this: "We the (CBI) will allow you to change your testimony in future if your 'conscience' wants you to do so because of a change in the government." Cho is furious with the CBI for withdrawing two cases recently (wheat deal and aerial spray cases) filed against Mr Karunanidhi and other DMK leaders during the Emergency. These two cases, among others, had been cited by Mrs Gandhi while Mr Karunanidhi's government was dismissed in early 1976. "It was bad enough that several cases pending against the Congress(I) leaders were withdrawn after the fall of the Janata regime because the witnesses made U-turns," Cho told SUNDAY. "It's an insult to the tax payers that the CBI should so freely allow people to withdraw their testimony due to political reasons."

Cho makes it clear that he is not indulging in gimmicks for the sake of instant popularity. "Whatever I do, I write about it in my magazine hoping to enlighten my readers on various aspects of political skulduggery." One of the senior IAS officers, who had deposed against Mr Karunanidhi in 1976, has changed his mind now, says Cho, because of the second honeymoon the "Amma" DMK is having with the Congress (I).

Earlier on 7 May after the *Makalu* sabotage Cho had sent a letter to the home minister, Zail Singh. The letter was accompanied with a rubber stamp with these words, "You are dimissed." The letter says.

“"What schemers these saboteurs are. The systematic way they have gone about, to put an end to the Prime Minister's life, is chilling and blood curdling. They knew the date of the PM's scheduled flight and damaged the cables of one of the planes earmarked for her, 20 days in advance, being fully aware that the aircraft would be used several times on commercial flights during the intervening period of 20 odd days! Meticulous planning indeed! I am surprised that these treacherous persons did not cut a few cables in the concerned plane sometime last year, timing it to crash only when the PM used it this year,

Cho Ramaswamy

TOOBHAR PAROT

The stamp Cho sent Zail Singh

this month.

"Anyway, you have done the right thing by dismissing several officers of Air India without any enquiry. Let them go to court. Poor chaps, they do not know that you can enact an Ordinance, even while the Parliament is in session, preventing the courts from looking into the cases of dismissed officers of Air India.

"I am sending you separately by registered parcel, a rubber stamp with the inscription 'You are dismissed!' This is to facilitate the issue of immediate orders of dismissal of various senior officials. Since these three words 'You are dismissed' constitute the entire procedure for the termination of services of senior officials, I hope you would have lot of use for this rubber stamp. A word of caution. Please ensure that the rubber stamp does not fall into wrong hands like that of the PM, for then, it may be used against you."

Cho seemed quite happy with the response of his readers to the letter. Does the home minister have enough sense of humour to appreciate his letter? Said Cho: "Mine was a token protest against the ugly games played by politicians; whether Zail Singh can read between the lines of my letter is not important. My readers and the general public have to know about it; that alone matters."

Arthur Pais

MANIPUR

Death of a PLA leader

Imphal: On 8 May, for the first time in the history of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), a black balloon was sent up as a sign of mourning. The reason: Samarjit Singh, 21-year-old leader of the outlawed PLA was killed that morning along with another member of the group, Batti Singh, in an encounter with the security forces in Yaskul near Imphal city on the southern edge of the headquarters of the first battalion of the Manipur Rifles.

Samarjit Singh in April 1976

The police had information that a group of PLA guerillas would be in Imphal and had accordingly strengthened their forces. The guerillas were surrounded by the security forces comprising the police, the Manipur Rifles and the commandos. In a last-ditch battle, the guerillas were caught in the police ring. Batti was hit on his right palm and while he tried to escape, he was killed. Samarjit Singh was killed by light machine gun fire, caught between a bamboo fence and a truck. Both of them died with "Victory for the PLA" on their lips.

What appears intriguing to many is why a brilliant student like Samarjit Singh joined the PLA. Singh was born in an affluent family on 11 June 1959. The third son of Mr Chongtham Nadia Chand Singh, a leading advocate of Imphal and an important member of the Congress(U), Samarjit bagged the national scholarship in 1971 for his brilliant performance in his studies in class six. He went to the Air Force Central School, in New Delhi for further studies. But an ugly incident took place here, which left on him a deep impression and made him change his life-style. He was called a "Junglee (savage)" by a student of the school. Samarjit, in retaliation, hit the boy with his pen. The principal was told of Samarjit's violent behaviour and as a punishment he was ordered to crawl on the floor. While he was crawling, Samarjit was taunted again. Once again, he was ordered to crawl. This time more boys joined in taunting and provoking him. Despite this, Samarjit excelled in sports; he was the captain of the Delhi Basketball team for the national competition. In 1971 for his final examination in the secondary board he got two scholarships: national and state. He opted for the state and joined the Sriram College of Commerce under Delhi University as an honours student.

During his days in college, he was believed to have been attracted by the CPI(M-L). He was scheduled to sit for his final examination in April 1980. He returned home in the middle of December 1979 and on 11 January 1980 he left home never to return again. In fact, he went to Moreh to cross the border and joined the PLA group led by Surja Boro, a Lhasa returnee. From then on, it was a life of encounters with the authorities. The ambush laid for the additional superintendent of police, Mr Romendra Kumar, was masterminded by Samarjit Singh (SUNDAY 3 May 1981). Samarjit was also involved in two ambushes and two robberies and a raid on the Mongsangai SSB camp from where rifles and a machine gun were taken away.

For Mr Singh, Samarjit's father, it was a big blow, although he had declared publicly that he did not support the anti-national activities of his son. With a choked voice he wondered if it was necessary to encircle the handful of guerillas with about 300 armed security personnel. He was proud, he said, that his son had not died a coward.

K. C. Chaudhuri

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KENNETH ANDERSON

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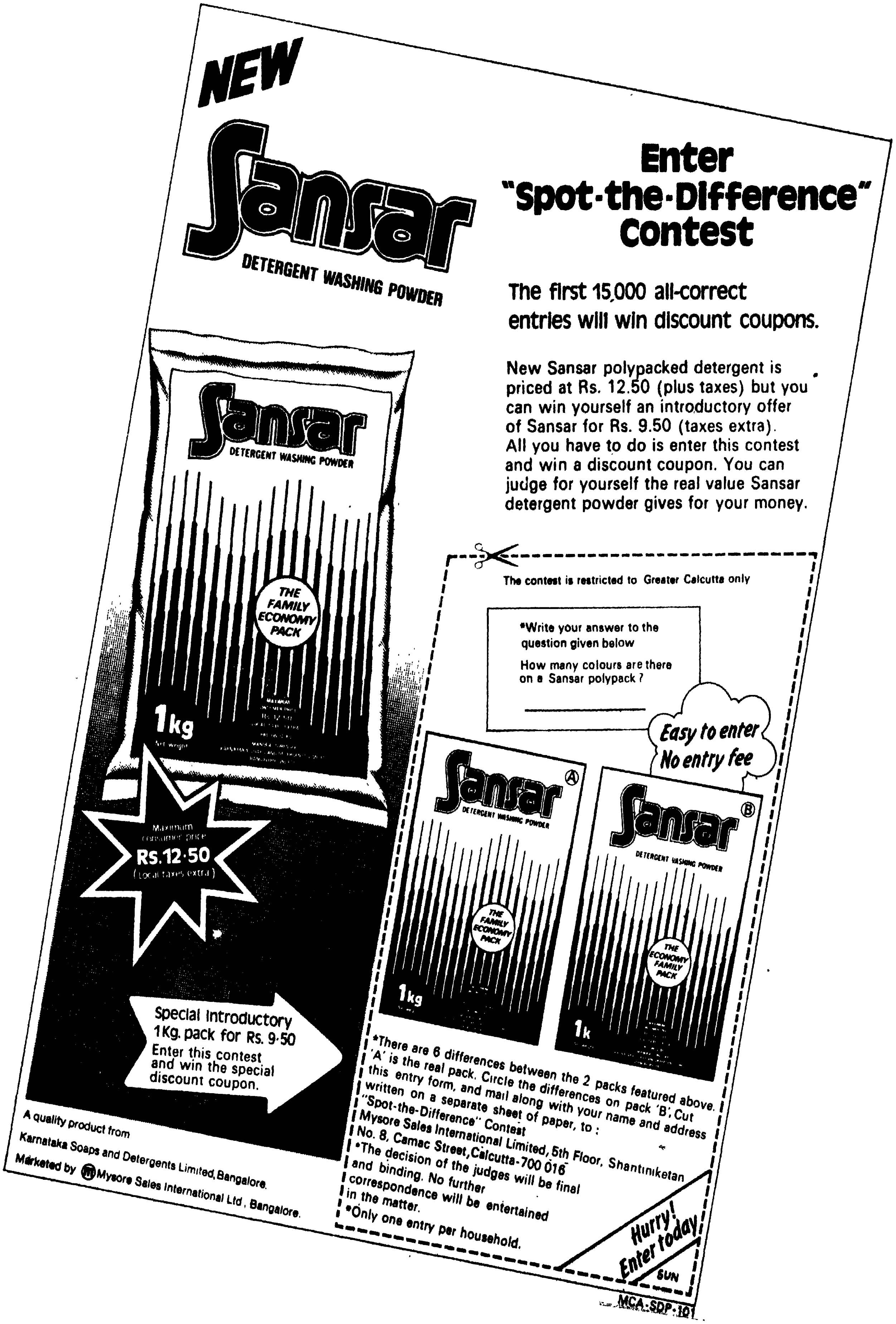
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Curing heart diseases

The National Heart Institute (housing both a hospital and research facilities) set up by the All India Heart foundation at the cost of Rs two crores is being opened in Delhi in July. For the hospital, cardiac catheterisation equipment, now only used in developed countries, is being imported at a cost of Rs 50 lakhs. The very modern institute will have all the latest facilities to help doctors answer the many questions about the heart.

Free medicine, shelter, food

Dr A. A. Sathar, an eminent opthalmologist based in Madurai, has been conducting free medical camps for people of the area. Though he is helped by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, a large part of the success of the project is due to the personal initiative of Dr Sattar, who is being helped by members of his family. According to Dr Azeez Sattar, secretary to Dr A. A. Sathar's organisation, over 16,000 people in many parts of Tamil Nadu have benefited from Sathar's services. At present, Dr Sathar and his team are working on a scheme to treat 2,000 people in and around Vinayambadi. At least 25 per cent of the patients will be treated absolutely free and will be given free shelter and food, while others will be charged a nominal sum.

Our own "dust catcher"

Scientists at the Central Mining Research Centre (CMRC), Dhanbad, have evolved a new and effective device for dust collection during the deep hole drilling operations in mines. This "dust arrester" can be particularly useful in open cast coal mines where drilling has to be done as deep as 15 to 20 metres and with a diameter of about 10 inches. At present underground drilling operations are done to a depth of six feet and width of about two inches. This device, wholly designed and produced by the CMRS, is said to be far superior to the equipment we currently use, the "dust catcher," supplied by the USSR.

Prizewinning film

After being denied entry into the eighth international film festival earlier this year, Utpalendu Chakraborty's *Mayna Tadanta* (Post morten) has bagged this year's national Rajat Kamal award for the best first film by a new director. The film, a moving account of the Savar tribals around the Bengal-Bihar-Orissa border, was only granted a screening in the festival's market section but this was enough to attract the attention of the foreign critics whose lavish compliments forced the festival authorities to arrange for a special second screening.

GOOD NEWS

Anti-TB, leprosy drug

Hindustan Antibiotics, a public sector undertaking at Pimpri has developed a formulation of Rifampicin, the latest and most effective anti-tuberculosis and anti-leprosy drug. Mass production of this drug is being undertaken under the sixth plan.

New equipment to check oil leaks

The Research and Development Centre (R&DC) of the Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) has designed and developed a new type of photo sensors leak detection unit and thermocouple standardisation unit The latter is used in steel plants to measure the temperature of molten metal, while the leak detection unit is used to detect leaks in oil pipes. The R&DC has also implemented a few computerised systems, which have increased the yield and quality of the products of steel plants, and have saved raw material and energy costs

Help for farmers

The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) is launching a massive Rs 210 crores project with the assistance of the World Bank. Called NCDC II, it will provide storage facilities to farmers, including provisions for cold storage and potato marketing, according to NCDC managing director, V. B. L Mathur

Doorstep doctor

On 12 May, a door-to-door medical service programme was begun by the New Delhi Municipal Corporation, under which free medical diagnosis will be provided to the poor.

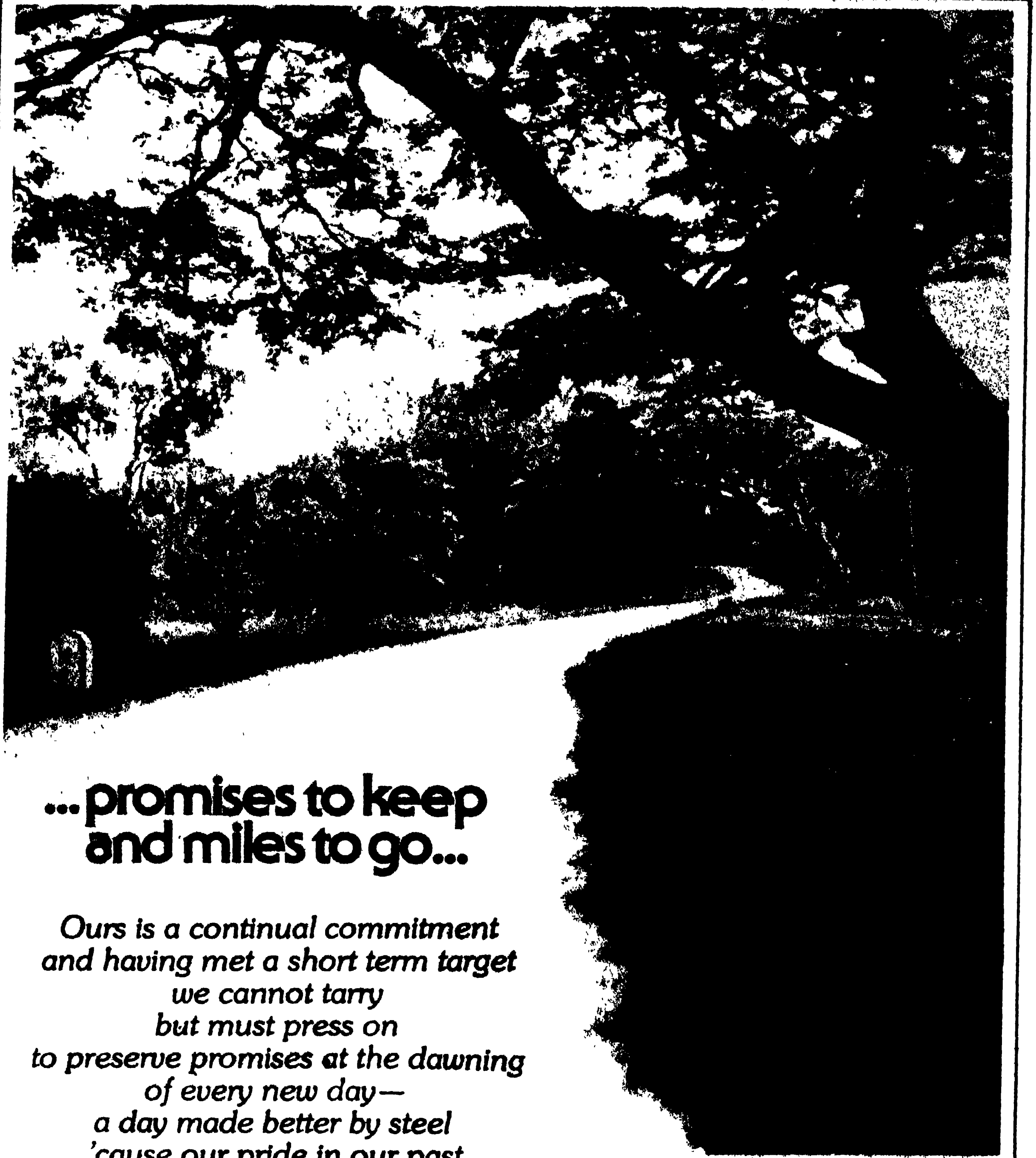
First copper foil project

The Rajasthan State Development Investment Corporation has decided to launch a Rs 10.25-crore copper foil manufacturing project which will provide employment to 250 persons. The project which will be located on a 25-acre plot along the Jaipur-Bikaner Road will be the first such project in the country. It is expected to start production by June 1982.

Wonder child

Nine-year-old Anupam De is a child with a passion that has already taken him far in life, very early: roller skating. After four years of determined practice and sundry competitions, Anupam won the national championship in artistic skating for under-tens. Anupam had also won the silver medal in the Jaycees' championship skating in May 1979, the silver medal for speed skating in the 1979 August state championship, represented his state, Gujarat, in the All-India roller skating championships in September 1979 in Mussoorie. Though Anupam did not win a medal for any speed skating event for which he had been entered, he surprised everyone by walking off with the silver medal for figure skating for which he had been entered in the nick of time. In October 1980, he took part in the All India Open Roller Skating championship held in Mussoorie; he won the silver medal for the 100 metres and bronze for the 200 metres race for under-tens. A boy with a fine academic record too, Anupam makes it a point to see that his skating does not interfere with his studies; he studies early in the morning, before going to school and after returning from practice in the rink in the evening.

Anupam De



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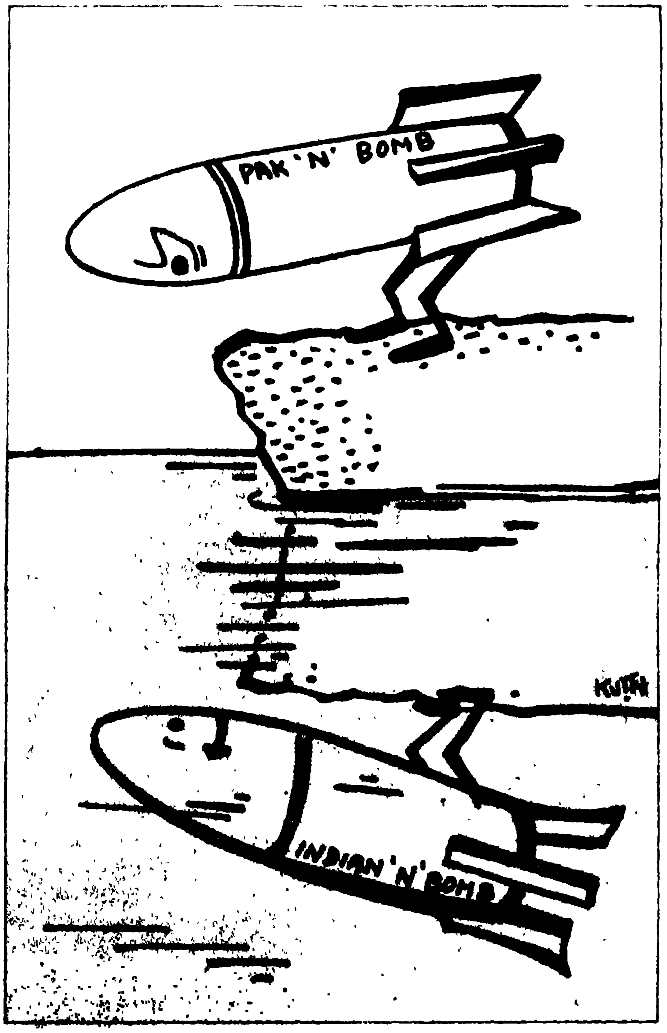
The Government

Kudremukh output still goes abegging

Early this year (SUNDAY 11 January) we had reported that Kudremukh's iron ore products were going abegging, and the situation still remains unchanged. There seem to be no takers for the iron ore concentrates from the Kudremukh plant and pellets from the proposed pellet plant at Mangalore (using Kudremukh concentrates). So far only a trial order for 50,000 tonnes of concentrates has been received from Romania. Russia and Trinidad and Tobago are in a position to buy the concentrates provided Indian ships can carry them. But that will only be possible if the ships do not have to return empty after unloading their bulk cargo. This is yet to be arranged. The marketability of Kudremukh products would improve if larger ships (over 100,000 DWT) could call at Mangalore port, reducing the unit cost of freight. But right now only ships of upto 60,000 DWT can call at Mangalore. The union shipping ministry seems to be in no mood to invest more on increasing the draught at Mangalore and has even stopped the dredging needed to receive ships of upto 60,000 DWT as it sees little prospect of an immediate increase in traffic. Thus the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company seems to be caught in a vicious circle from which there seems to be no immediate way out.



Reluctant to seek advice

After first delaying for a long time the reconstitution of the central advisory council on trade, the commerce ministry took a full two months more just to notify its decision. The council consists of representatives of public financial institutions, trade and industry and MPs and is meant to advise the ministry in foreign trade matters. The previous council was constituted by Mr Mohan Dharia, commerce minister in the Janata cabinet, and held its last meeting two years ago. Considering the current poor export performance, the ministry can use all the advice that it can get.

Is this 'information'?

The Press Information Bureau was recently pressed into the service of a union cabinet minister seeking to ingratiate himself with the powers that be. On 14 May it issued an unofficial press note publicising a letter Mr Veerendra Patil, union transport and shipping minister, wrote to Rajiv Gandhi welcoming his entry into politics. The letter said: "I greet you heartily on your entry into active politics to serve the nation. I have no doubt that you will serve as a beacon light to the present generation of our country. Your filing of the nomination paper for the Amethi constituency is welcomed from all sides and I have no doubt that you will return with a thumping majority." This, despite the specific instructions of Mr Vasant Sathe, union information and broadcasting minister, to all government media heads "not to publicise any particular candidate, more so those belonging to the ruling party, during the coming elections."

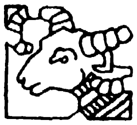
Right company for foreign travel

How quickly a bureaucrat's foreign trip is cleared seems to depend more on how much 'influence' he wields rather than his relative seniority or the importance of his assignment. Otherwise, how can one explain the fact that approval for the textile secretary, Mr Saran Singh's tour plans for the USA was held up and it was even suggested at one stage that he be accompanied by Mr S. P. Gugnani, additional secretary and financial advisor to the commerce ministry, so as to smoothen the clearance. Mr Singh eventually did go on his own to the USA to promote jute exports but Mr Gugnani was not to be left behind. He journeyed to London, accompanied by B. S. Thacker, an STC executive in charge of sugar exports, to renegotiate a deal for the re-export of sugar imported last year.

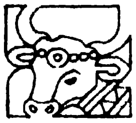
Cement price rise stalled

Politics seems to have come in the way of the revision of the retention price for cement, which was due on 3 May. Otherwise how can one explain the government's decision at this late stage to refer the matter to the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices. Manufacturers have been asked to provide data to the bureau by 15 June. This seems a transparent delaying tactic. A reference to the bureau is unexceptionable in itself but the whole matter has already been gone into by the working group on the cement industry appointed by the Planning Commission in November 1980. The working group was headed by none other than the industry secretary, Mr S. M. Ghosh, and state industry minister Charanjit Chanana announced some of its recommendations to Parliament on 22 April.

Beginning 7 June

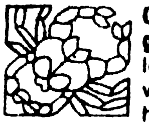


ARIES (15 April—14 May) All matters related to the heart, including love and romance, are well signified this week. Your domestic front will be calm and a source of great comfort and inspiration. The time is particularly favourable for speculative ventures You can afford to take reasonable risks New friends and a promotion are also in store for you You are advised to push your affairs to the hilt **Good dates**: 7, 9 and 11 **Lucky numbers**: 2, 3 and 5 **Favourable direction**: East



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This week has significant financial gains in store for you Letters will bring good tidings, you are advised to pay heed to them Most of your debts will be cleared Law suits, if any, will be settled in your favour However, your health will cause anxiety Family affairs will not progress smoothly, children will worry you to no end Love affairs are not well signified either. Check extravagance **Good dates**: 8, 9 and 12 **Lucky numbers**: 2, 4 and 7 **Favourable direction**: South

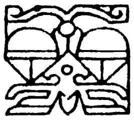
GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Problems on your professional front are in store for you this week Those who are employed run the risk of losing their jobs; but this may well be a change for the better Your domestic front is very well signified there are indications of auspicious happenings Sometime towards the end of this week a splendid opportunity will come your way, you are advised to take full advantage of it **Good dates**: 8, 10 and 12 **Lucky numbers**: 3, 6 and 9 **Favourable direction**: West



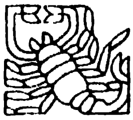
CANCER (15 July—14 August) Despite initial problems and anxiety, this week will prove to be a happy one. Luck will favour you in many ways; you, on your part, will only have to make the effort in order to be crowned with success Your seniors or those in authority will prove to be very helpful. The time is particularly favourable for intellectual pursuits. You are advised against making erratic changes on your professional front **Good dates**: 7, 10 and 13 **Lucky numbers**: 2, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction**: North-west

LEO (15 August—14 September) Professional, domestic and social activities are well signified this week and there should be no reason why you cannot enjoy a happy time Your stars appear to be very favourable for you to take decisions, launch fresh ventures and make whatever changes you deem fit You are advised to rely on your intuitions and to take reasonable risks **Good dates**: 11, 12 and 13. **Lucky numbers**: 4, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction**: North.

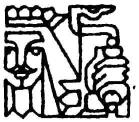
VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This week has plenty of fun and pleasure in store for you, provided you are willing to forget your professional worries for the time being. The time is also favourable for taking unlimited risks both on your professional and domestic fronts. You might be disheartened by slow progress. However, you will find yourself in a position to solve personal problems. You are advised to guard against deceit. **Good dates**: 7, 8 and 10 **Lucky numbers**: 5, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction**: East.



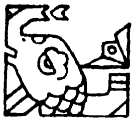
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This week has plenty of good fortune and opportunities in store for businessmen; they will enter into new contracts, acquire fresh stocks or hit new sales targets. Others will enjoy a happy domestic life. Law suits will be settled in your favour. Letters will bring good tidings. The time is particularly favourable for making amends and necessary changes on your professional front **Good dates**: 9, 10 and 13 **Lucky numbers**: 3, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction**: South-west.



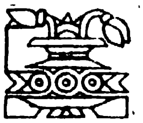
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) An important new friendship will result in a happy romance this week Some may gain through inheritance Others will make steady progress on their professional fronts A marriage in the family is indicated You might have to undertake a journey which will be the answer to one of your pressing problems. You are advised to seek and act upon the advice of elders and to guard against deceit. **Good dates**: 7, 9 and 11. **Lucky numbers**: 2, 5 and 9 **Favourable direction**: North.



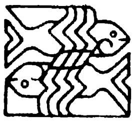
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Humiliation and failure are in store for you this week. The time is not favourable for undertaking new ventures. You run the risk of getting into disputes and arguments with both seniors and subordinates However, womenfolk will be of great help to you Your domestic front will be peaceful You are advised to stay clear of questionable pleasures. **Good dates**: 8, 10 and 12. **Lucky numbers**: 2, 6 and 9 **Favourable direction**: West.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This week has excellent prospects in store for you, provided you are willing to take advantage of the many opportunities that come your way. You can safely rely on your intuitions to guide you The time is particularly favourable for expanding business interests. You will stand to gain through a secret association or information. Look after your health. Do not be indifferent to matters related to the heart **Good dates**: 7, 9 and 13. **Lucky numbers**: 1, 5 and 6. **Favourable direction**: North



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Relatives will prove very helpful and their cooperation will contribute to your success this week. You will be required to shoulder fresh responsibilities Family members will expect a lot from you; do not disappoint them. You might suffer ill health as a result of which you may have to neglect your work. Do not take things for granted as the days ahead are difficult. Check extravagance and impulsiveness. **Good dates**: 8, 9 and 11. **Lucky numbers**: 1, 6 and 7. **Favourable direction**: East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) You must be prepared to face obstructions and delays on your domestic and professional fronts this week. The time is not particularly favourable for love and romance. Financially our will find yourself in a better position A few lucky hunches will prove to be beneficial to you. A letter from a friend or associate will bring some vital information regarding your work. Take nothing for granted. **Good dates**: 10, 12 and 13. **Lucky numbers**: 1, 4 and 8. **Favourable direction**: South.

Political forecast for President Reddy: The President may suffer from a heart disease. He is advised to be careful about his movements as a fatal accident is indicated Though he will not survive his full term in office, President Reddy might play a controversial role in the administration of the country after October this year. His decision on an important matter may cause damage to the country; for this he will come under harsh criticism.

AMRITLAL

ls india

prize rs. 30 for the entry given first

NEW DELHI: The students of a town in Andhra Pradesh have to be given periodic "smell holidays." In his address to a symposium on water and sanitation problems here, the former union irrigation and power minister, Dr K. L. Rao, disclosed that the school in the town of Vijayanagar is situated too close to a tank which receives the town sewerage. Sometimes the pungent smell from the tank becomes so offensive and unbearable that the school has to be closed to save the students from the foul smell. The municipal authorities of the town who were requested to delink the sewerage from the tank pleaded their inability on the ground that the project would cost Rs 12 lakhs—*Times of India* (Md. Aftabhussain, Gaya)

PONDICHERRY: In a strange filial relationship a chick has adopted a monkey as its foster mother. The monkey which lives in a coconut grove, carries the black chick on its neck according to some residents of the area. Whenever it gets something to eat it first feeds the chick. Occasionally it allows the bird to move on its own but only under its watchful eye. The animal and the bird were seen together for at least one week now—*Indian Express* (O. G. Krishnamurthy, Madras)

PANAJI: Judges in court are 'fair' and 'humane' according to their code of ethics. But judges can be'unfair' and 'immoral' too. A civil judge in 1969 had engaged a woman stenographer to work for him. She obliged him every day in his chamber by showing him undue favours—by making love to him. They used to go home for lunch to an adjacent building near the court and on return, their kissing, cuddling and petting sessions would go on for an hour. An advocate married the steno without any knowledge about her affairs.In the same year, a peon trying to blackmail the judge and the woman revealed the ugly truth and their sexcapades ended there and then. The judge's wife divorced him and the woman's husband left her. Another fact about the judge came to light when he was being examined in a contempt case. In 1972 the judge had been promoted. A buxom woman was assisting him in his day-to-day affairs. Being the wife of a corrupt official she came at a receiving end when her husband got entangled in a graft case. The woman begged for mercy which was readily granted. But the price she paid was four years of sexual appeasement. Her ordeal only ended when the judge was finally removed from service—*Current* (Aloke Gupta, Calcutta)

NEW DELHI: It was an unusual convocation. There was no vice-chancellor nor any deans. About 150 medicos received their degrees at a people's convocation. The convocation was held here yesterday (9 May) at the Delhi Medical Association Hall. The degree recipients were graduates and post-graduates of the Maulana Azad medical college. As the college had not organised their annual convocation, the Junior Doctors' Federation did it for them. Donning a red gown, the noted jurist Mr V. M. Tarkunde gave away degrees, administered the Hippocratic oath and delivered the convocation address. Parents, doctors and students of the capital's other medical college were present and cheered the medicos—*Indian Express* (Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, Naupada, Thana West)

CALCUTTA: A blue Ambassador slowly rolled on to the stage and stopped and Shihan Dadi Bulsara slipped under its rearwheel. A karate expert, the car passed over his groin as the 8,100 crowds watched in disbelief. Bulsara claims it to be an unique achievement as according to him nobody in the world has ever attempted what he had done. But this was not the only spectacular feat Bulsara, branch chief director and controller of the All-India Yokushin Karatedo achieved. He had earlier broken eight slabs of ice each weighing 70 lbs, to create another world record, surpassing the one created by M. Nakamura of Japan who broke six slabs of ice at the karate olympics at Tokyo in 1979. In the other show of the day the second All-India Full Contact Karate Championship, Mahesh Bajaj of Bengal with a green belt overcame his fellow state Kareteka Nijammuddin Abir (brown belt) to emerge the grand champion and win the handsome Wills Virginia trophy—*Indian Express* (Rajeshwar Tayal)

Peons in the chemical industry in Greater Bombay earn a minimum of Rs 878 a month and, at the maximum, as much as Rs 1,431 a month. The peons draw a higher salary at both minimum and maximum levels than headmasters in the Bombay Municipal Corporations' schools who get Rs 671 and Rs 1086 a month respectively, at the two levels. These figures are given in the wage map of Bombay published by the Employers' Federation of India—*Financial Express* (G. D. Gupta, Delhi)

without comment

We do not want to spoonfeed the people. We can only assist and guide them to stand on their own feet—Rajiv Gandhi

We young men in politics are looking up to him for leadership. Like his grandfather, father and mother, he will lead this nation to a better future—Farooq Abdullah, MP and president of the National Conference

Rajiv's nomination is the comical finale to Mrs Gandhi's family drama. It seems that the people's only hope for survival lies in a succession battle between Rahul Gandhi and Varun Pheroze Gandhi (late Sanjay Gandhi's son)—Mohan Singh, chief whip of the UP Lok Dal legislature party quoted in *India Today*

Having defeated the mother (Mrs Gandhi) at Rae Bareily, I have no desire to fight the son—Raj Narain

I believe in open politics and so does Mr. Chavan, I think—Devara Urs, Congress (U) president

This is an individual act. This is the style of functioning to which he has always been opposed, and now he himself is resorting to it—Rajn Patel, Congress (U) working committee member on Y. B. Chavan's desire to join Congress (I)

Congress(U) is not a political party at all and hence the question of its merger with Congress (I) does not arise—Vasantrao Patil, AICC(I) general secretary

It is high time the AICC(I) general secretary, Mr Vasantrao Patil, took to political *sanyas* and devoted the rest of his life to social work such as starting a marriage bureau to help young girls get married—Babasaheb Bhosle, Maharashtra's minister for law and judiciary

The Congress (under Indira Gandhi's leadership) is there to rule the country for at least two decades—Y. B. Chavan, Congress(U) leader quoted in *Current*

We don't believe that the Soviet Union will launch a massive military attack against Pakistan, because that can precipitate a truly global crisis. What is relevant is a limited attack—Agha Shahi, Pakistani foreign minister quoted in *Blitz*

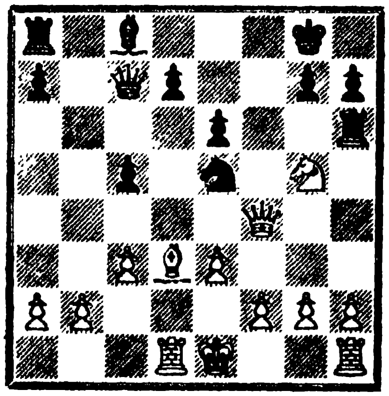
I suspect we would go to war (in the Gulf area) if the energy crunch became serious enough to warrant going around unscrewing light-bulbs, for example—General Volne Warner, the head of the US readiness command

A woman flirts almost instinctively when somebody of the opposite sex catches her attention. It is a question of chemistry—Actress Sim Garewal quoted in *Current*

ration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

chess

Hebden (Black)



Schussler (White) to move
Position after Black's 28th move

Robert Silk Fellowship

For a young player seeking to establish himself in international chess it can prove very difficult to gain sufficient experience against strong opposition Invitations to international tournaments come broadly speaking only as a result of successes in other international tournaments But how can one succeed at international level without first having a chance to play in such events? Catch 22 Success requires experience, but experience can only be gained as a result of success

For this reason the Robert Silk Chess Fellowship provides invaluable opportunities to our younger players The fellowship takes the form of a training tournament played between a selected group of our most promising players with a couple of invited overseas masters to add some bite The prize for the highest placed British player is the opportunity to play in an international tournament somewhere in Eastern Europe, if possible the USSR. For an aspiring chess-player such a reward is incalculably more valuable than a mere cash prize Five years ago the Robert Silk Fellowship gave me the opportunity to play in the Alekhine Memorial Tournament in Moscow, a very strong event to which I could never otherwise have received an invitation

This year s Robert Silk Fellowship was shared by three players, Glen Flear, Julian Hodgson and Ian Wells, who shared second place in the tournament behind the invited Swedish international master Harry Schussler Hopefully, for them this tournament will be to the first stepping stone to a successful international career

I give a game by the tournament winner which produced a nice finish

White H Schussler Black M. Hebden
Benoni Defence

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. N—KB3, P—B4; 3. P—Q5, P—QN4; an ambitious move, but playable.

4. B—N5, Q—N3; 5. P—B3, N—K5; 6. B—B4, P—K3; 7. P x P, BP x P; 8. P—K3, B—K2?; overlooking White's rather sly threat. Instead 8. . . B—N2 would have given Black a good game

9. Q—Q3, N—Q3; 10. B x N, B x B; 11. Q x NP, Q—B2; White has won a pawn for not very much.

12. Q—R4, N—B3; 13. N—R3, O—O; 14. N—N5, Q—N1; 15. N x B, Q x N; 16. R—Q1, Q—B2; 17. B—Q3, R—B3; 18. N—N6, R—R3; 19. Q—KB4, N—K4; Now White finishes the game with a neat combination.

DIAGRAM

20. B x P+, R x B; 21. N x R, B—N2; for if 21 K x N, 22 Q—K4+, winning the rook in the corner

22. N—N5, B x P; 23. R—KN1, R—KN1; 24. Q—KR4, N—B6+; 25. N x N, B x N; 26. Q—K7, R—B2; 27. Q—K8+, R—B1; 28. R x P, resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

The declarer's play on this deal from the Vanderbilt Cup was described in the *New York Times* as 'A play in a million'. It is attractive because it does not conform to any familiar pattern

Dealer, South. Game all

North
♠ A 10 5 2
♥ 6 5 4
♦ 10 8 4
♣ A 10 6

West
♠ 8 7 3
♥ K Q 2
♦ A Q J 5 2
♣ 7 5

East
♠ Q J 9 6
♥ J 10 9 7
♦ 6 3
♣ Q J 9

South
♠ K 4
♥ A 8 3
♦ K 9 7
♣ K 8 4 3 2

North-South were playing negative doubles and the bidding went

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	1♦	dble	No
1NT	No	No	No

Unwilling to concede a trick to the King of diamonds, West began with the King of hearts East encouraged, and South held up until the third round. He could then see

North
♠ A 10 5 2
♥ —
♦ 10 8 4
♣ A 10 6

South
♠ K 4
♥ —
♦ K 9 7
♣ K 8 4 3 2

If clubs are 3-2, declarer will have enough tricks and will lose, apparently, at most three hearts, two diamonds and one club But Milton Rosenberg saw more deeply into the position. Suppose a club is ducked to East and the thirteenth heart is cashed: what is South to discard on this trick? Not a diamond, obviously, and a club will leave him a trick short. So it must be the 4 of spades, but then his entries will be in disarray when the defence takes one diamond and exits with a club.

It might be possible to lose a club to West, not East, but the declarer found a better plan. He cashed the King of spades and only then ducked a club to East. He discarded ♠ 4 on the last heart and the defence, as expected, played a diamond to the Jack and exited with a spade. As the spades had been unblocked, there was no problem now in taking seven tricks.

TERENCE REESE

stamps

Every winter since 1950 the West German Post Office have issued a special series of four stamps to raise funds for charity Each stamp is sold at a small premium above its face value for postage, the extra representing the charity donation which is handed over by the Post Office when sales have been completed The early issues portrayed famous philanthropists, including Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale and Dr Nansen Other series have featured fairy tales, children's toys, even chessmen and pewter figurines In recent years the series have been devoted to wild flowers Those shown on the current series are species which are endangered by modern methods of agriculture Among them, on the 60 plus 30 pfennigs stamp (above) is 'Kornrade the corn cockle

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1 What is Yezhovshchina?

2. One has heard of impressionism in art but what is impressionism in music?

3 What is Bretton Woods associated with?

4 What is gnosticism?

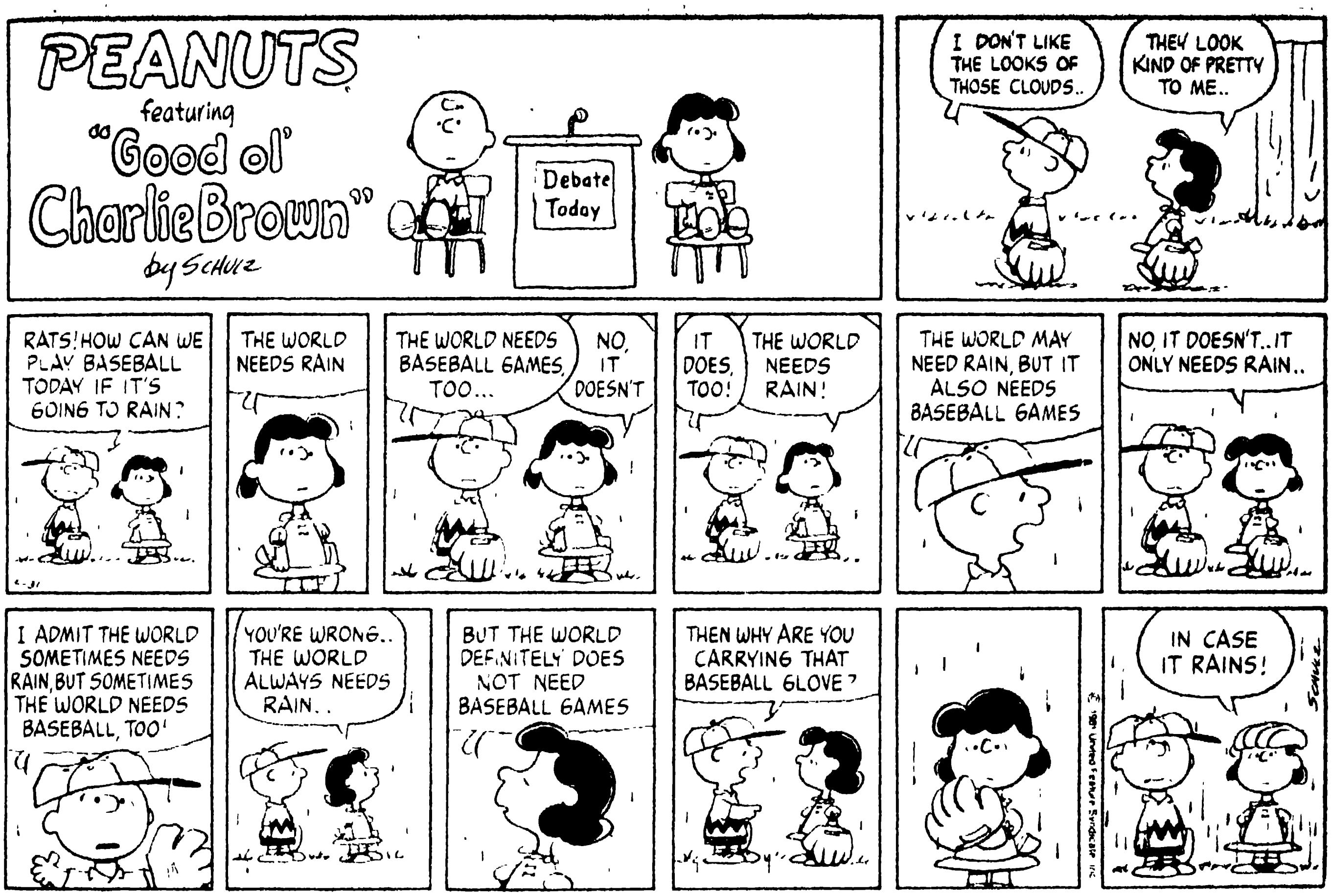
ANSWERS

1. Literally means "the Yezhov time." It was the period of most intense terror in Russia under Stalin between September 1936 to December 1938 when Nikolai Yezhov was the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs i.e. head of the secret police.

2. Impressionism in music was first introduced by Debussy in 1892 in his *Prelude a l'apres-midi d'un faune*. It is a style in which the composer evokes a scene in an undramatic manner.

3. The formation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) A series of final meetings took place in 1944 in Bretton Woods, Maine, USA between the Americans, the British and the Canadians

4. Religion which claims to be based on a special knowledge of the spiritual world denied to the religious authorities


PEANUTS
featuring "Good ol' CharlieBrown"
by SCHULZ
Debate Today
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THOSE CLOUDS..
THEY LOOK KIND OF PRETTY TO ME..
RATS! HOW CAN WE PLAY BASEBALL TODAY IF IT'S GOING TO RAIN?
THE WORLD NEEDS RAIN
THE WORLD NEEDS BASEBALL GAMES, TOO...
NO, IT DOESN'T
IT DOES, TOO!
THE WORLD NEEDS RAIN!
THE WORLD MAY NEED RAIN, BUT IT ALSO NEEDS BASEBALL GAMES
NO, IT DOESN'T..IT ONLY NEEDS RAIN..
I ADMIT THE WORLD SOMETIMES NEEDS RAIN, BUT SOMETIMES THE WORLD NEEDS BASEBALL, TOO!
YOU'RE WRONG.. THE WORLD ALWAYS NEEDS RAIN..
BUT THE WORLD DEFINITELY DOES NOT NEED BASEBALL GAMES
THEN WHY ARE YOU CARRYING THAT BASEBALL GLOVE?
IN CASE IT RAINS!
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SCHULZ

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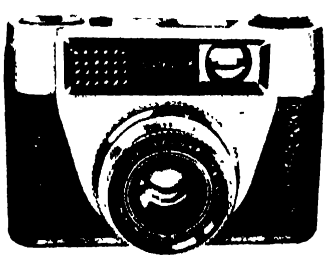
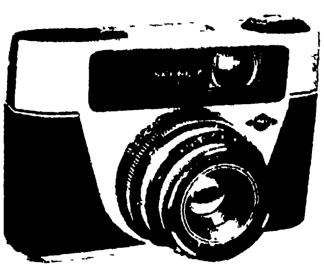


SPRINTY BC



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GOA IS NOT DELHI

HABITS die hard. The famous Mr Jagmohan, who is now Lt. governor of Goa, Daman and Diu, landed at Panjim to find that all union territories are not alike. On his second day in Panjim, he summoned the inspector-general of police, Mr G. S. Mander, for a briefing on the law and order situation. Mr Mander, who had earlier worked in Delhi police (he left Delhi after his junior, Mr P.S. Bhinder, was made the police commissioner), dutifully turned up at the Lt. governor's house at the appointed hour. While he was waiting to be called in, the chief minister of Goa happened to walk in. He asked the IGP what he was doing there. When Mr Mander told him about the Lt. governor's summons, the CM asked him to go away as the task of briefing the Lt. governor was that of the chief minister. Apparently Mr Jagmohan, accustomed to the *jee huzoor* politicians of Delhi, had underestimated Goa's politicians.

BANIAS OF THE BJP

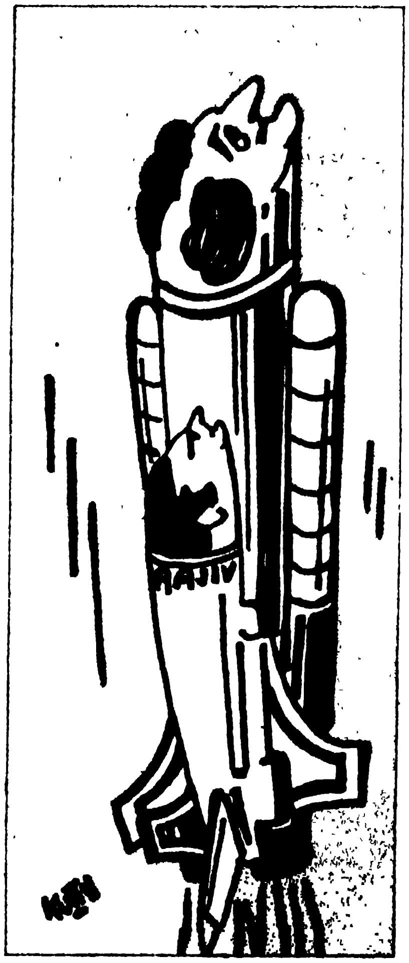
WHAT is the definition of "essential commodities?" For the BJP, which is essentially a party of the *bania* (trading) class Campa-Cola, Vanila icecream, jams, sauces, cheese and butter are all essential commodities The party recently issued comparative figures of prices of essential commodities in Delhi to show how steep the price rise has been in the past three years. Only 12 really essential commodities were in the list which the BJP issued. But then whoever said the BJP had any understanding, appreciation or sympathy for the poor?

HOPE FOR SCIENCE GRADUATES

ON 30 April, 18 top scientists of the country were summoned by the government for a meeting of the advisory committee on science and technology, presided over by the Prime Minister. One appalling fact which came up in the meeting was that today there are nearly three lakh science and technology graduates in the country who are without jobs. At the same time, in the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre alone, some 2,500 jobs are lying vacant. The reason for this is that the minimum requirement for the jobs is a first class degree and many do not have that qualification. The consensus of the top scientists was that while the graduates with first class degrees should certainly be favoured, there was no point in having posts vacant (thereby hampering work) while there were unemployed hands around. The Planning Commission member, Dr M. S. Swaminathan, has now been entrusted with the task of looking into this peculiar problem and finding a solution.There may soon be good news for the unemployed science graduates in the country.

JANATA SPLIT AHOY?

IS the Janata Party heading for yet another split? In the first week of May, Mr Subramaniam Swamy and Mr Piloo Mody held a secret meeting at Mr Mody's residence with over 20 Yuva Janata leaders. The topic of discussion: how to combat Mr Çhandra Shekhar's growing influence within the party.



INTEMPERATE MINISTER

MR BHAGWAT Jha Azad, union minister of state for supplies and rehabilitation, is in the news again. Earlier, in January he hit the headlines because of an assassination attempt in his house (when his security guard was shot dead). Now he is alleged to have slapped a security guard in Parliament House because the latter did not allow him to enter a minister's room. As reports go, Mr Azad had gone to meet the parliamentary affairs minister, Mr Bhishma Narain Singh, one day. Mr Singh had instructed his security guard not to allow anyone into his chamber. But Mr Azad did not listen to the guard and tried to force his way in. The guard resisted and the minister slapped him. A reference to this incident was made by the BJP leader, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, during the debate on the noconfidence motion in the Lok Sabha in early May. Mr Vajpayee did not name Mr Azad, but asked the parliamentary affairs minister to reveal the name. He did not, but soon afterwards the watch and ward staff of Parliament spread the word that it was Mr Bhagwat Jha Azad who was the man.

RAW DEAL?

ASIAWEEK, the glossy journal published from Hong Kong, has been sued in a Delhi court. Mr Asoka Raina, author of *RAW—The inside story* (published by Vikas) has sued the paper for damages amounting to Rs 1,05,000 for a reference made about him in a review of the book published by *Asiaweek*. Mr Raina has, stated through his lawyer, Mr Vijay Panjwani, that the review referred to him as a RAW agent, which has made his friends and relatives shun him. This is one of those rare occasions when a foreign journal has been sued for defamation in an Indian court and the proceedings are bound to take an interesting turn as RAW too is involved.

TAILPIECE: Union railway minister Kedar Pande got slightly carried away at a meeting of the Railway Hindi Salahkaar Samiti, the advisory body that promotes the use of Hindi in the day-to-day workings of the railways. Mr Pande declared that the time has come for the railways to use the Devanagari script not just in computers but in xerox machines also!

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

'তিলোত্তমাও পরম রূপবতী, কিন্তু আয়েষার সৌন্দর্য সে রীতির নহে'

"যদি চিত্রকর হইতাম, যদি এইখানে তুলি ধরিতে পারিতাম,…যদি সে কপাল তেমনই নিটোল করিয়া আঁকিতে পারিতাম, তাহার উপরে তেমনই সুবঙ্কিম কেশের সীমা-রেখা দিতে পারিতাম, সে রেখা তেমনই পরিষ্কার, তেমনই কপালের গোলাকৃতির অনুগামিনী করিয়া আকর্ণ টানিতে পারিতাম, কর্ণের উপরে সে রেখা তেমনই করিয়া ঘুরাইয়া দিতে পারিতাম; যদি তেমনই কালো রেশমের মত কেশের কথা লিখিতে পারিতাম, কেশ মধ্যে তেমনই করিয়া কপাল হইতে সিঁথি কাটিয়া দিতে পারিতাম—তেমনই পরিষ্কার, তেমনই সূক্ষ্ম, যদি তেমনই করিয়া কেশ রঞ্জিত করিয়া দিতে পারিতাম, যদি তেমনই করিয়া লোল কবরী বাঁধিয়া দিতে পারিতাম,… …"

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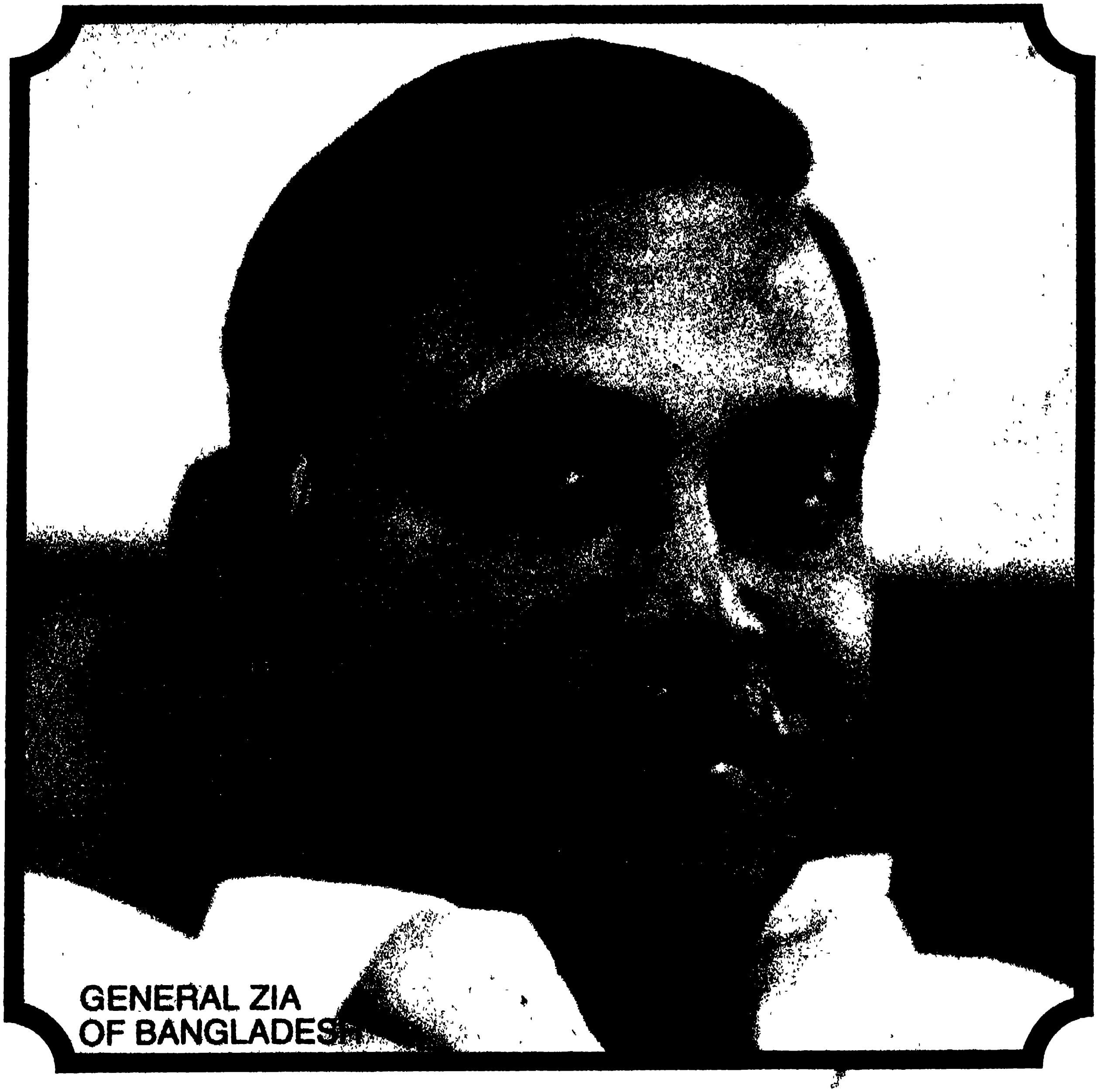

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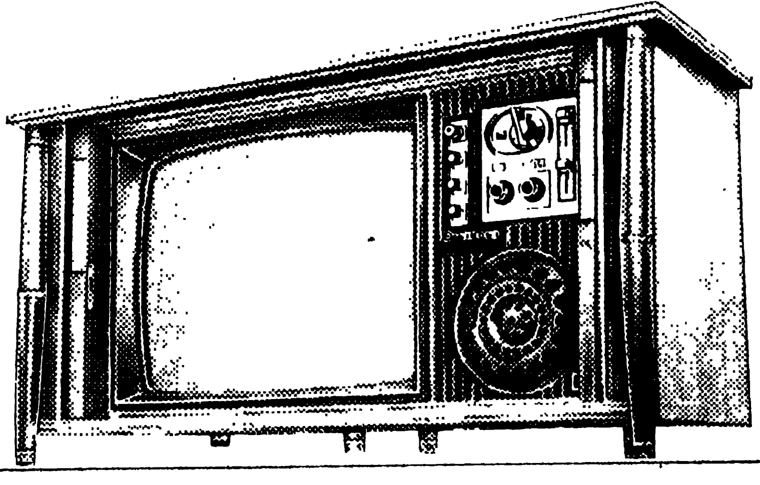

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SUNDAY
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AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

June 7, 1981

Early on 30 May in Chittagong, Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman fell to the assassin's bullet, the same bullet that had helped him come to power by snuffing out the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15 August 1975 But the rebellion of Maj-General Manzoor, architect of the coup, was shortlived. it lasted only three days. SUNDAY reports on the dramatic events and analyses why this young nation is so prone to violent upheavals. **Page 10**

One thousand harijans have recently embraced Islam in an obscure Tamil Nadu village It was not their love of Islam that made them do so but the desire to escape from the bondage of the Hindu caste system. Tooshar Pandit investigates this happening of enormous social significance. **Page 40**

The Garhwal parliamentary by-election is particularly significant as Mr H. N. Bahuguna, who resigned the seat after leaving the Congress(I), is seeking to prove that he can be a political entity even without Mrs Gandhi's charisma to help him. A good Congress(I) candidate fights a Garhwali who has nursed his constituency for years. **Page 22**

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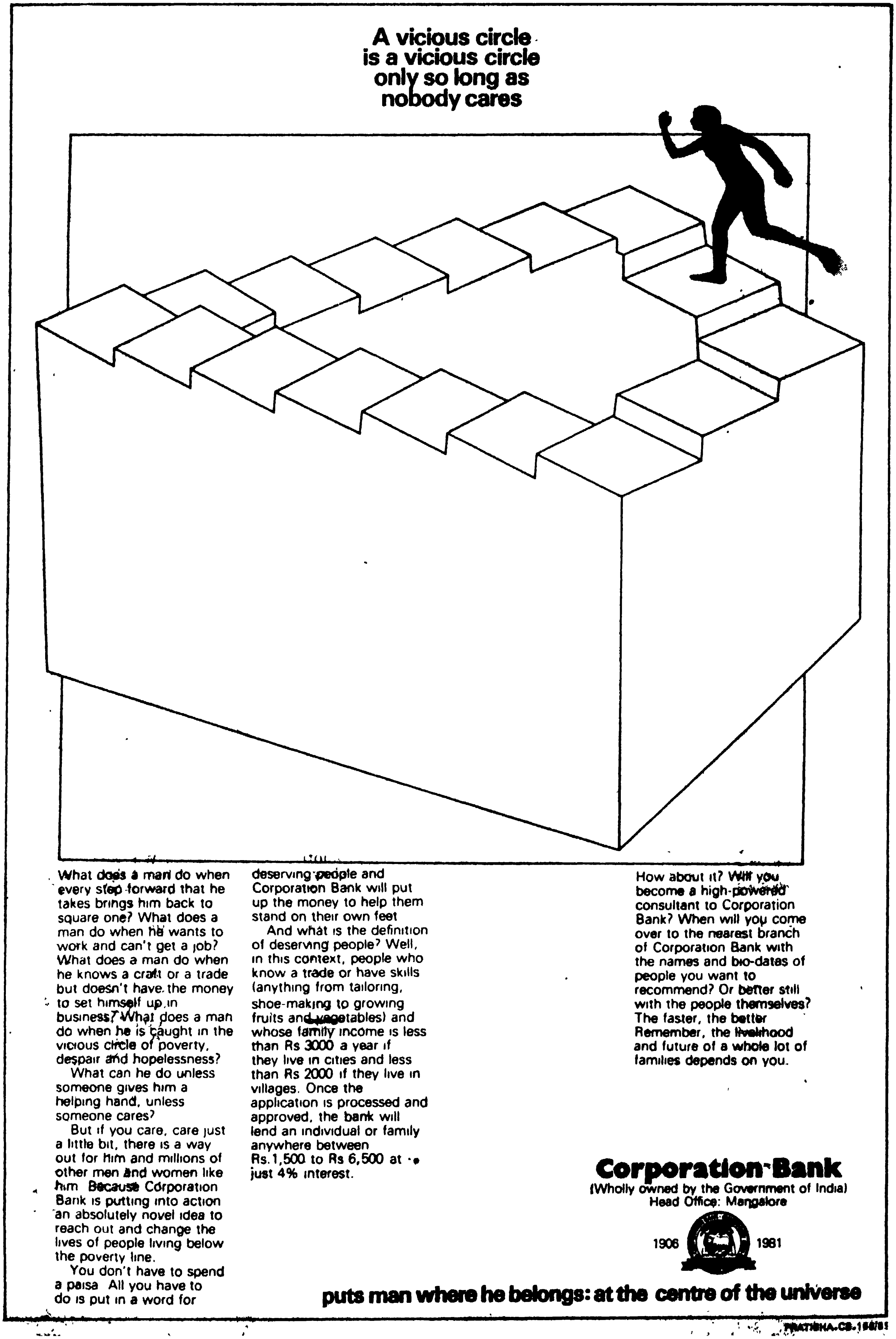

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PRATIBHA-CB-158/81

EXCLUSIVE
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BY KULDIP NAYAR

The army's promotion grievances

The army gives orders to the Border Security Force (BSF) in times of war. But the trouble is that the army officer giving an order has to put in a "sir," even though the BSF officer receiving the order should have been the one to do the "siring." The army's complaint is that many of its officers with longer service are lower in rank than those of the BSF.

The grumbling over rank is no longer confined to the mess rooms; it has spilled over into the files of the defence and home ministries. Even the ministers concerned are now aware of it. Sometime back the defence secretary wrote to the home secretary voicing this grievance of the army. He said that officers of para-military forces like the BSF and the Central Reserve Police (CRP) as well as short service or emergency commissioned officers absorbed by these para-military organisations "have had much faster promotions in the BSF and CRP than regular and permanent commissioned officers of the Indian army."

The defence secretary's letter pointed out that some officers directly recruited as assistant commissioners in the BSF and CRP reached the rank (equivalent to Lt Col.) in six to ten years and some even reached the DIG rank (equivalent to brigadier) in 16 to 18 years of service, whereas in the army "there were numerous officers who were still majors with 20 to 25 years of service to their credit, and even those who have picked promotion to the selection rank of Lt Col. have done so only at the stage of 16 to 18 years of service." According to the defence secretary, promotion to the brigadier rank was available at the stage of something like 24 years of service, whereas direct recruits to the BSF and CRP attained the rank of DIG much faster.

The home secretary has conceded the defence secretary's point, admitting that the quicker rate of promotion of officers in the BSF and CRP than in the defence services is "çontrary to the government policy." However, the confidential letter the home ministry has issued after the defence secretary's objections has made no change in the rules for the selection of DIGs. "A serving IPS officer in the rank of SP or commandant who has put in 16 years of services can pick up the rank of DIG." This is what the army says is unfair.

The home ministry's defence is that even though IPS officers with 16 years of service become eligible for appointment to the post of DIG," in reality they do not "earn their promotion before completion of 18 years." On comparable promotion prospects in the officer's cadres in the BSF, the home ministry has preferred to remain silent. The rules still are such that they benefit BSF and CRP officers against those in the army.

Because of the creation of new posts in the army, the stagnation in promotions due to increased intakes after the 1962 war has been broken somewhat. But an army officer's progress up the promotion ladder is still painfully slow. A review of the armed forces' cadres has revealed that opportunities taper off at the top and there is frustration among officers who stagnate. The paper the three service chiefs submitted last year to the government referred to the stagnation aspect. Even after the creation of 1,200 posts of Lt Col. and wing commanders, it was argued, only one-third of officers could expect to reach that level.

The "seniority" enjoyed by some BSF officers must be causing much heart-burning to army officers during operations because they have to bear the brunt. For army officers with more years in service to have to "sir" BSF officers must be bad for morale.

Indeed, an IAS officer takes 18 years to become a joint secretary, while a service officer may or may not become Lt Col.,wing commander or commander in this period. The IAS has about 3,000 officers. All of them become joint secretaries and 60 per cent of them go beyond, attaining the rank of secretary, equivalent to that of a full general. At present the IAS has 80 secretaries, 120 additional secretaries and 600 joint secretaries.

Even otherwise, officers in the civil services who start their careers on the same footing as an army, navy or air force officer go up to the rank of joint secretary, equivalent to that of major general. In the forces, there are only three secretary rank officers—the three chiefs of staff themselves. Officers equivalent to lieutenant generals and major generals are also fewer than in the civil services.

Coming back to the BSF officers, it is true that a study group set up by the committee of secretaries to the government of India (a senior officer was nominated by the chief of army staff on the committee) recommended that the BSF should have a separate identity. The group emphasised that the BSF be placed under the operational control of the army in warlike conditions, even when it might be performing its normal functions like preventing crime, smuggling, and infiltration.

The "seniority" enjoyed by some BSF officers must be causing much heart-burning to army officers during operations because they have to bear the brunt. For army officers with more years in service to have to "sir" BSF officers must be bad for morale. What the army cannot forget is that several BSF officers are former short-service or emergency commissioned officers who would have been lower in rank had they been absorbed in the army.

Another army complaint is that the officers of the BSF and other para-military forces are wearing the same epaulettes to indicate rank as those in the army. A captain in the army and an assistant superintendent of police wear three stars, a major and an SP three lions, a brigadier and a DIG three lions and three stars and a major general and an IG crossed swords. Even the ribbons used by the jawans of the two forces in some cases are identical. The army feels that in the border areas where the para-military forces operate, army officers have been confused with those of the BSF and vice versa. And all this is rubbing salt into the wounds of the army.

EXCLUSIVE

SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY reports amazing details of India-China relations under the Janata and explains the implications of the sensational reception he recently received in Peking

Amazing details

Subramaniam Swamy's *Bull in the China shop* clearly revealed the many shocking aspects of Indo-China relations. If at all the Indian government wishes to normalise ties with China, your cover story warrants serious attention.
R. K. Gulati, Siliguri

Thanks to Dr Swamy for his bold and sensational story. I was shocked to read about the way Atal Behari Vajpayee behaved before his trip to China in 1979.
S. Virupaksha, Bangalore

More than the absurdities of Indo-China relations, Dr Swamy has revealed the contradictions and infighting within the Janata party when it was in power.
Pijush Kanti Chandra, Kharagpur

I endorse Dr Swamy's view that "normalisation with China is essential on its own merits." Unfortunately our ruling party leaders were never keen to normalise Indo-Chinese relations as was evident from the arrest of several CPM leaders in 1964 when they were campaigning for closer ties with China.
Bichitra Badajena, Khurda (Orissa)

I still fail to understand what stands in the way of a healthy Indo-Chinese relationship which Dr Swamy has advocated.
Siddharta Sarkar, Purulia

The cover story with its amazing details made superb reading.
Siddharta Kumar Roy, Karanjia (Orissa)

All these years I held Mr Vajpayee in esteem for his honesty and straightforwardness. But after reading your cover story I have lost all faith in him. Can Atal*ji* refute the allegations made against him by Dr Swamy?
S. Laxmi Kanth, Chittoor

While congratulating Dr Swamy for his cover story I find it difficult to overlook the fact that he has made a conscious effort to earn the sole credit for re-establishing Indo-Chinese friendship.
M. K. Vasudevan, Bombay

Reading the cover story I got the impression that the author was trying to pat his own back without caring for the sentiments of others.
Sugata Adhikari, Chandannagar (West Bengal)

It was vulgar of Dr Swamy to suggest: "If Vajpayee goes first (to China) he will only ogle at the girls..."
Budhin Kumar Dutta, North Lakhimpur (Assam)

Reading the cover story was a painful experience. For all his academic qualifications, self-professed intelligence and ability to speak Chinese fluently, Dr Swamy has emerged an extremely petty-minded politician who thinks nothing of demeaning those who were once his colleagues. His repeated attempts to run down Atal Behari Vajpayee, besides being totally irrelevant to the subject, were far too crude and slanderous.
Sushil Mehtani, New Delhi

Even the Chinese would be embarrassed by the way Dr Swamy has sung their praises.
Rizwana Akhtar, Cuttack

Before sermonising on the probable benefits of normalising our relations with China, Dr Swamy should have considered the fact that it was the Chinese who betrayed our trust in their bid to recover 'lost territories' in 1962. That was a bitter lesson. Besides, China is now a close ally of the USA. India is justified in responding cautiously to the latest Chinese overtures for friendship.
Radhakanto Das, Calcutta

Strangely, the author has made no mention of our humiliation when, during the then foreign minister Vajpayee's visit to Beijing in 1979, China attacked Vietnam.
Jacob Verghese, New Delhi

The account of the meeting between "China's No. one" (Deng Xiaoping) and India's No. zero (Subramaniam Swamy) made interesting reading.
Abhijit Ganguly, Baidyanath (Bihar)

Nothing can be further from the truth than Dr Swamy's claim that he was never associated with the RSS. During the Janata regime he was a compulsive visitor at the RSS office in Delhi. He regularly attended the weekly RSS *shakhas* and on a number of occasions these *shakhas* (which I attended) were held in Dr Swamy's flat at 22, Dr R. P. Road in Delhi.
Dr Baldev Prakash (ex-MP), Amritsar

No one can object to Dr Swamy's personal efforts to cultivate the Chinese or to his study of the Chinese language (although given the background of Indo-China relations, such efforts can hardly be seen as patriotic). But his proposal to bring China, India, Pakistan and the whole of south-east Asia together as a third centre of power is absurd.
R. Ramakrishnayya, Tenali (Andhra Pradesh)

Khali-stan

Anil Saari's cover story, *Sikhs: the third nation?* (3 May) has revealed a frightening fact: the Khalistan movement has either the moral support or the indifference of the 'higher-ups' in Delhi. Otherwise, how does one explain the "passport ceremony" in the presence of pressmen, photographers and CID officials? How is it that Darbara Singh's Punjab government did not get wind of the fact that Balbir Singh Sandhu was planning to hold the ceremony?
K. S. Rajan, Trivandrum

I wonder whether the initiators of the Khalistan movement are aware of the consequences of their deeds (the "passport ceremony" in particular).
E. P. Sivadasan, Coimbatore

Unless the government takes immediate action the demand for *Des Khalsa* will inspire many more communal movements in the country.
Abhijit Malakar, Chakmaghat (Tripura)

A nation within a nation is a utopian concept.
S. S. Dinkar, Pondicherry

My name is Padmanabham. I wish to form a country called 'Padmasthan.' I have a better following than Balbir Singh Sandhu (c/o Khalistan)—14 dedicated disciples (the figure would be 19 if my family members are included). I have found a press to print passports, official stamp and currency notes of 'Padmasthan.' It would be appreciated if the chief reporter or any other representative of SUNDAY can interview me and help the cause of an independent country within the country.
Padmanabham, Shillong

While appreciating the effort to bring the Khalistan movement to public view, I cannot help observing the fact that the problem is not as alarming as it appears. There are only a handful of people who are trying to get something out of nothing.
Bhabagrahi Jena, Karanjia (Orissa)

The minority communities have always been concerned about their individual status and security; the concept of Khalistan is an extension of that concern.
A. A. Alvi, Aligarh

It is difficult to sympathise with the cause of anti-nationals.
Tish Kumar Malhotra, Delhi

The fact that there is still a Sikh Regiment in the Indian army is evidence of the special privilege extended to the Sikhs in India. Balbir Singh Sandhu should take note of this.
Razia Ashraf, Kanpur

Tale of courage

There was nothing new about the story except that it was *Tarla's story* (3 May) and not that of many other career-oriented wives. Tarla of course was bold enough to raise objections and subsequently leave her husband's house. Others succumb to social norms and resign themselves to their fate in joint-family dens.
Laxmikant Adhikary, Parlakhemundi

While conveying my sympathies to Tarla I cannot help observing that the press often takes a very biased view of social problems. There are many instances of middle-class career wives dominating their husbands and causing problems as a result; but these are seldom highlighted.

The Hindu joint-family system has evolved from *dharma* which demands that a man must take care of his parents till their last breath (for after all, it is to them that he owes his very existence) along with his brothers, sisters, wife and children. The reason behind the disintegration of the joint-family system is the modern-day *bahu*, notwithstanding employment opportunities in distant places which lure the man away from his larger family. But the bonds are seldom broken; the sense of duty remains. And it often happens that in performing his duty (sending money to his parents for their livelihood, to his brothers for their education or to his sisters for their marriage) the husband faces opposition from his domineering wife. One of my colleagues used to send money to his mother by post making sure that the acknowledgement slips from his mother reached him in office; whereupon, he would promptly tear up the receipts lest his wife found them in his pockets.

Ramapuram Chandru, Madras

Shantaram's cake

National awards: Shantaram's tamasha (10 May) was an excellent report on the backstage events before the awards were formally announced.
P. S. Thiyagarajan, Aruppukoltai (Tamil Nadu)

Notwithstanding the *tamasha*, this year's national film awards prove one point: Bengalis are still the most culturally advanced people in India.
Shevlin Sebastian, Calcutta

If *Bengal takes the cake* it is only because the cake has been baked by Shantaram.
C. T. Puvi Arasu, Tuticorin

Jury member Shobhna Samarth's ignorance ("Who's Karl Marx?") shows what her convent education is worth.
Pradip Chakravarty, Raigunj (West Bengal)

After seeing the Malayalam film *Lorry* I was shocked to read Shantaram's opinion of it. He is quite simply a conservative.
A. P. Thomas, Pune

The government should divest the jury chairman of his veto power; otherwise the national awards will have no credibility.
Radhakrishna Khatavkar, Bangalore

It is a pity that Karnataka which once had a virtual monopoly over national film awards, has figured nowhere this year, thanks to Shantaram and his jury.
Anil Khataukar, Bangalore

Shantaram is clearly hostile to Tamil and Malayalam films.
N. Seshadri, Tiruchirapalli

I did not expect a man of Shantaram's stature to play such an unfair game.
R. Vasudevan, Kalpakkam

To err is Piousji

Piousji is misinformed about Sarada (*Khaas Baat*, 10 May). The actress has won the Urvashi award on three occasions (twice for Malayalam films *Thulabaram* and *Swayamvaram* and recently for the Telugu *Nimajjanam)*, not just twice as reported. It is also wrong to suggest she has put on weight and lost her charms; Sarada joined films 20 years ago with a figure of 36-22-36 and has maintained it to date.
M. Anand Kumar, Visakhapatnam

Actor Vijayan's first film was not *Uthiripookal* as pointed out by Piousji (10 May). He made his debut, playing a retired handicapped army officer, in *Kizhake pokum rail* which was released in 1978.
S. Sridhar, New Delhi

We regret that owing to the rise in the cost of newsprint we have been forced to raise the price of SUNDAY from this issue to Rs two.

Chastened view

Four months ago I read your report on Aligarh Muslim University (*Aligarh's communal student 'leaders,'* 1 February) and refused to believe a word of it. But after witnessing the recent violence in our campus, I have the courage to change my view. AMU has gradually become instrumental in deciding the fate of Indian Muslims; each time a political party wants to woo Muslim votes it immediately expresses solidarity with AMU. As a result, more and more young, ambitious and politically-oriented people have been seeking admission to the university which serves them well as a springboard for entering national politics. Academic standards have deteriorated with a good majority of students falling prey to political parties. And while they raise communal slogans and arouse religious sentiments, the few who are honest and dedicated suffer. The present vice-chancellor is one of the victims of political and religious fanaticism.
Ijlal Ahmad Kidwai, AMU, Aligarh

Dangerous game

Fehmida Riaz, the "fearless feminist from Pakistan," while contending that *Even the Koran is censored* (10 May) claims that portions of the holy book which speak of tyranny and *dajjal* have been censored in Pakistan. I would like to point out that the word *zulm* (tyranny in Arabic) and its various derivations appear in the Koran in 286 places; I have checked all these places in all the different Pakistani editions of the Koran and found them intact. Ms Riaz would do well to specify the edition(s) from which the words have been expunged. And as far as the word *dajjal* is concerned, neither that nor any word derived from the root of D. J. L. is mentioned in the Koran; therefore, the question of censoring it does not arise. There are many ways of mobilising public opinion against the military regime in Pakistan. But why drag the Koran onto the battlefield? Mrs Riaz should know that such a game can be very dangerous: she is playing with a boomerang.
Mushirul Haq, head of department, Islamic and Arab-Iranian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

The Hitler-Zia comparison was very apt; I congratulate Fehmida Riaz for giving such a bold interview.
M. Viswanathan, Jamshedpur

It is clear from Ms Riaz's interview that the war against oppression has not yet been lost in Pakistan.
K. P. Andavan, Coimbatore

Three-tier crime

Dhanbad's latest 'Guru' (10 May) speaks of our judicial system: T. P. Singh was twice arrested and bailed during his early criminal career and it was only after he became the 'coal king' that he was finally brought to book.
Shankar Das Banerjee, Kharagpur

It is regrettable that white collar officials of the public sector undertakings are hand in glove with criminals.
Sanatan Biswas, Rourkela

Case for sabotage

It is surprising how the experts SUNDAY consulted ruled out *Sabotage* (*Was the PM's life really in danger?* 10 May) of *Makalu*. The fact that, despite strict security measures permitting only accredited technicians access to the aircraft, a dismissed employee of Air India managed to find his way into a Boeing 707 hangar, indicates foulplay. Besides, repeated checks revealed more and more defects in *Makalu's* cables. The 'foreign-hands' theory stands to reason because this is exactly the kind of thing which agencies like the CIA specialise in.
K. Narayan, Madras

Last letter

If the farmer is the backbone of Indian economy, who is the paunch? The politician, of course.
H. K. Vadlamani, Guntur

Rs 50 for the last letter

THE MEANING OF THE BULLET

It was a bullet in Dacca which brought Ziaur Rahman, then a 39-year-old major, to power in 1975. It was a bullet which ended a reign begun in chaos. The two bullets had different things to say, but they had one thing in common: power born out of the barrel of the gun tends to demand its price. And Zia fell to another army officer's ambitions just when it seemed that he had stabilised both his personal and his country's status, after two successful general elections (at least one of which was not rigged to ensure Zia's victory). But perhaps Zia had begun to relax, begun to feel that he had acquired legitimacy and now was deriving his power from the hearts and minds of the people and not from the barrels of army guns. On 30 May a general called Manzoor Ahmed shot down the illusions. Using sources in Bangladesh, Delhi and Calcutta, we attempt to clear some of the mysteries surrounding the assassination of General Zia, and explain the many meanings of the bullets fired in the early hours of Saturday morning.

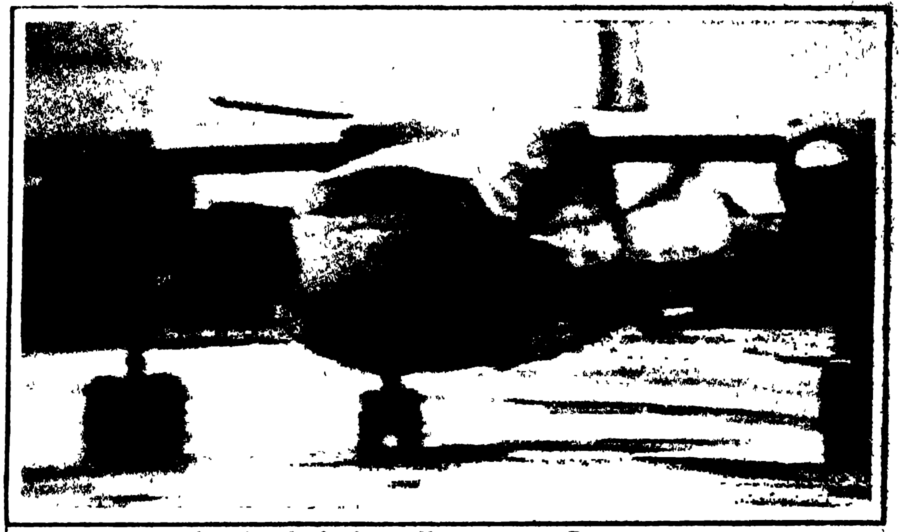
It was a terrible night. A storm had broken out over the port city of Chittagong and there was no sign of it abating. What would the weather be like in Dacca, President Zia mused as he changed into his *kurta* and *pyjama* for the day's last *namaaz.* He used to pray five times a day, and now, after a tiring, hectic day he was getting ready for prayers. Just then the telephone rang. It was well past midnight. His wife was on the line. How was he, she asked. "Fine," the President replied. Then he asked about the weather in Dacca. It was cloudy. "Here we are having rains and a storm," Zia said. When would he be back? "Should be home for breakfast," Zia replied on the phone. That was the last sentence President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh spoke to anyone.

The conversation over, Zia knelt on the mat spread over the floor of his upper floor room of the Chittagong circuit house to offer his *namaz.* Then to bed: at 1.40 am. Zia had flown in from Dacca by Bangladesh Biman around noon on Friday 29 May, to settle a dispute between two influential local leaders of his party the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), Jamaluddin, the industries minister, and Sultan Ahmed Choudhury, the deputy speaker, and he had not had a moment's rest. With him had come a number of other important leaders of the party, including the general secretary A.Q.M. Badrudduza Chowdhury, the state minister for manpower,Syed Mahibul Hassan, the leader of the party's trade union front Mizanur Rahman, and of the women's front Begum Amina Rahman

There was another reason for the trip: to talk to the men and the officers of the army division posted in Chittagong. For the past few months he had been receiving disturbing news from Chittagong cantonment. In January this year Maj Gen Manzoor Ahmed had been transferred and given charge of Chittagong division after Zia suspected that Manzoor, then the chief of general staff in Dacca, was getting much too ambitious, and had set his eyes on the office of the chief of the army staff, the highest post in the armed force. To avoid what might develop into a ruinous struggle, Zia ordered the transfer. Now, to clip Manzoor Ahmed's wings further, Zia was planning to shift him to the innocuous office of the chief of the staff college.

Obviously, Gen Manzoor was not happy over these developments. But Zia also knew that in the past Manzoor Ahmed had stuck with him at difficult moments. Therefore, he would not believe either the rumours or private intelligence reports that questioned Manzoor's basic loyalty to him and his government. But he did not lose that sense of caution which had kept him alive through so much uncertainty and danger during his six years in power. He wanted to find out for himself what was really going on in the cantonment. Zia had a very hectic day, meeting

Zia's body being taken from Dacca airport to Sangsad Bhaban


Plane that brought Zia's body from Chittagong to Dacca

The mourners at Dacca airport waiting for Zia's body

party leaders, addressing civil servants and doing a round of the cantonment. The dispute between Jamaluddin and Sultan Ahmed appeared to be very bitter, and trying to resolve that took most of Zia's time. Discussions with his party leaders over this faction fight stretched beyond midnight without making much progress. But Zia was not too worried by this normal feature of politics; indeed, he looked buoyant as he had dinner with his party leaders after the meeting.

Zia woke up from sleep; dawn was still a couple of hours away. A noise very familiar to him, had distrubed his sleep. Shattering the pre-dawn stillness, and rising above the patter of heavy rain was the rattle of machine gun fire There could be no mistake about that sound. Zia climbed out of his bed and opened the door to see what was happening. As soon as he came out he was sprayed with bullets. The first bullet hit him on the thigh, while eight others pierced his stomach and chest and one went right through his head tearing on the way, his right eye to pieces. Death came immediately.

It was sixth time unlucky. Zia had survived five coups in six years (see box) but this time he lost out. A commando unit of the army's 24th Division (of which Maj Gen Manzoor Ahmed was the commander), comprising 25 men, reached the Chittagong circuit house under cover of heavy rain. Backed by rocket launchers, they crawled towards their positions around 3.30 am. As they reached the entrance of the two-storied victorian mansion, they fired off their rockets, filling the whole area with smoke. Shooting their way in, and killing a number of armed police and army guards on the ground floor, they rushed towards the staircase leading to the first floor where president Zia was sleeping in room number four. In 20 minutes their deed was done: they had killed the president.

The commandos also hammered open the doors of other rooms and let off indiscriminate bursts of bullets. Badrudduza Chowdhury, who was sleeping in the adjoining room, had woken up along with the President at the sound of the gunfire, but instead of coming out of the room to see what was happening, he hid in the bathroom—and managed to live. Dr Amina Rahman spending the night in another room, fainted out of fright and fell on the floor—thus escaping the bullets which were aimed higher. Other members of the president's entourage staying with him in the circuit house, his private secretary Col Mahfooz, the labour leader Mizanur Rahaman, and the state minister Mahibul Hassan, were spared.

The resistance from the police and the members of the President's Guards Regiment was light and the raiders quickly subdued them after they had shot down six personnel of the Guards Regiment, including both its top officers, and a police constable.

MANZOOR: Scotch and revolution

"*Scotchwalla Sarbahara*" (Scotch-quaffing proletariat). That was how Brig Khaled Musharraf, the man who staged the 3 November 1975 coup but lost out to Zia four days later used to describe Maj Gen Manzoor. Manzoor and Musharraf were thick as thieves and though both of them were fond of scotch and quite a few other good things in life, the latter did not share the former's pronounced Maoist leanings. Manzoor's Marxism may not have been a total fraud: his elder brother Mansur Ahmed, a barrister, was a close associate of Mohammad Toaha, leader of the Maoist Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal (Marxist-Leninist).

Abdul Manzoor was born on 14 February 1940 and was commissioned into the army on 24 April 1960 after being one of the two best cadets at the Cadet College, Sargodha and the Pakistan Military Academy. Immediately afterwards, he was detailed for two years with 1 East Bengal Rifles. Subsequently, he went over to West Pakistan and, in 1968-69, was sent to do a course at the Canadian Staff College. In 1971, he was the brigade major of 14 Para Brigade in the Shakkargarh sector in West Pakistan when, on 26 July, he escaped to India. The story of Manzoor's escape was told in his testimony to the military court by Col Taher, the man who saved Zia's life and staged his comeback through the 7 November 1975 coup, but who was later tried and executed by Zia. Taher revealed that Major Ziauddin, Captain Patwari and he set out from Rawalpindi in a second-hand car, purchased for the occasion. Added Taher: "Since we had to pass some daylight hours, we went to Major Manzoor's house who was stationed at Sialkot cantonment. When Manzoor came to know of our plan of escape, he remained quiet and expressed no enthusiasm. At the insistence of his wife, he at last agreed to escape with us. In this way, Major Manzoor, his family and his Bengali batman joined us. At nightfall, we drove up to the border, we abandoned the car and walked across the boundary and reached India."

Soon afterwards, he joined Bangladesh's liberation war and was appointed commander of liberation forces in the western sector, adjoining West Bengal. After liberation he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and named to lead the Jessore garrison. In the early Seventies he did a course at the National Defence College, New Delhi. Between February 1974 and December 1975, he served in the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi as 'Military Adviser' (initially with the rank of a full colonel and subsequently as a brigadier). The views that he expressed in his conversations—both private and public—indicated that he was convinced about Bangladesh's need for Zia. In fact, he was not considered markedly anti-Indian; either. Nor did he give the impression of being an advocate of Islamic fundamentalism. Those who came in touch with him admired him for his intellect and, later, gave him credit for masterminding quite a few of Zia's moves. Zia and he used to be close personal friends as lieutenant colonels.

It was Zia who brought back Manzoor to Dacca before the end of his term and appointed him chief of general staff. For some time, Manzoor got along very well with Zia. But, once Manzoor's overweening personal ambition got the better of him, a clash was inevitable. Zia watched, and, promoting him to the rank of major general, quickly despatched him to Chittagong to head an infantry division. Only recently, Zia reduced his importance further by suggesting he take over as the inconsequential commander of the Service Staff College. It was in the port city of Chittagong that Manzoor brooded, conspired and dreamt of revenge against his old friend who now ruled Bangladesh.

Fifteen other soldiers of the Regiment, and five policemen on duty, were wounded and immobilised. Once the raiders had killed Ziaur they disappeared—faster than they came. Badrudduza Chowdhury, emerging from hiding when the staccato bursts of gunfire had quietened, found Zia lying on his face outside the door of his room, in a pool of blood, literally riddled with bullets.

A second group of soldiers came later and took away the body of Zia, and of two other dead army officers, in an army ambulance. The bodies, rolled in tarpaulins, were buried without ceremony on the slope of a hill near the Chittagong Engineering College at Rangania, about 24 kilomètres south of the city.

The grave was dug by two civilians, each of whom was paid *taka* 25 (about Rs 15) and a *maulvi* was brought in from a nearby *mazaar* to perform the last rites. When the body of Zia was exhumed on the morning of 1 June, about 26 hours after he had been killed, by which time the abortive coup had been crushed, it had swollen considerably. The white *kurta* and *pyjama* he was wearing had not been removed, they were in shreds. In the breast pocket of the *kurta* was some money and a notebook; in a sidepocket there was a white handkerchief.

Whether Zia had an inkling of the events or not, he certainly made quite a few departures from his usual ways. Normally he travels in helicopters: this time he chose to travel by a civilian flight. He decided to stay at the circuit house at Chittagong instead of at the cantonment, as he normally did.

That Zia was assassinated in spite of these precautions means that the entire operation must have been thought out with care. Experts believe that the entire exercise had not only been planned in detail, but also rehearsed under simulated conditions. Manzoor, who had received training at the staff college, Canada, and had a stint in National Defence Academy, in India, and who was later posted at the Bangladesh High Commission at Delhi as military advisor, had a well-earned reputation as a brilliant strategist. It is hardly likely that he would have attempted a coup without going into all possible angles: that Zia might not stay at the cantonment, and the difficulties of conducting a coup in Chittagong which is in an extreme corner of the country, with the Indian border to the north, the sea to the south, and the Chittagong hill tracts to the east. The tracts are full of insurgents against whom Manzoor has conducted military operations several times. And the only approach to Dacca from Chittagong lies to the west. It is therefore likely that Manzoor had the tacit support of other senior army personnel posted elsewhere. There was no way he could capture power in Dacca, even with Zia dead, without troops stationed elsewhere also moving in his support.

According to reliable information, in the original plan the brigade commander at Dacca, Brig Ram Gulam Mukhtadir was to have launched a simultaneous attack in Dacca, seized all important installations, including the radio station, and taken over the command of the elite 9th division stationed at Savar, about 10 kms away from Dacca. It apparently, had, also been decided that the coup would be announced from Dacca and not from Chittagong. A fact that corroborates this is that though the President was assassinated at 3.30 in the morning and the body removed shortly afterwards, the announcement of the "rebel victory" was not made till around midday. As a matter of fact, the first mention of the assassination of the President was made by Dacca radio which remained throughout under the control of the central government. Manzoor, in all probability, was waiting for the announcement to be made from Dacca by Brig Mukhtadir.

However, once Dacca radio under official control, broke the news of Zia's death, it was clear to Manzoor why Brig. Mukhtadir had not taken over Dacca radio. Finally, at around 1.00 pm, he started sending messages to the chief of air force in Dacca, Air Commodore Abdul Gaffar, the GOC 33rd infantry division, Jessore, Maj Gen Shaukat Ali, and to the Bangladesh Rifles' headquarters in Dacca requesting them to cooperate "in the greater interest and integrity of the motherland" and "to unite in the name of Allah." None of them responded favourably. The only supprot he got was of the commanders of four infantry brigades, Brig Mohsinuddin Ahmed (a former director of military intelligence), Col Nawajis Ahmed (who had shot Khaled Musharraf during the 7 November coup that brought Zia to power), Lt Col Matiur Rahman (who had played a vital role in bringing Zia to power) and Lt Col Mahbubur Rahman, under his division. It is possible that Manzoor might have, at one stage, had the support of a section of the air force and navy stationed in Chittagong. He, however, did not have the support of the chief of naval staff, who escaped from Chittagong and pledged loyalty to the government at Dacca. The support of the navy was very vital for Manzoor for with its support he had the means to stop reinforcements from reaching Dacca.

"This is the Biplabi Parishad..."

The following announcements were made over the Chittagong station of Bangladesh radio on 30 May:

- **A *Biplabi Parishad* (Revolutionary Council) had been set up**
- **Parliament was dissolved**
- **The ministry under Zia was dismissed**
- **The Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty of 1972 was abrogated**
- **The revolutionary council would try its best to establish Bangladesh's rights over New Moore Island and to get an adequate share of the Ganges waters**
- **Bangladesh would continue to have friendly relations with Islamic countries**
- **All political activities were banned**
- ***Gram sarkars* (village councils) were dissolved**

Inspite of the fact that he received no response to his message, Maj Gen Manzoor Ahmed did not lose heart. He thought that by blowing up roads and bridges, he could stop any hostile force from Dacca entering Chittagong. Besides, he could, in turn, lay a seige on Dacca by cutting off all essential supplies, most of which came through Chittagong port. He obviously also hoped that soon many units of the army would start extending support to him. After all, the army, once having tasted power, might easily relish the chance to get back the power Zia had taken away from it by introducing civilian rule. He could also count upon the fragility of the system: the death of Zia *could* throw the country into chaos, the existing political system *could* collapse, and the army then would be forced to take over power. And then he, by virtue of the fact that he had killed Zia, would surely get a share of the power if not necessarily top billing. What he was waiting for was for the army to legitimise the assassination of Zia—as it had put its signature of approval to the assassination of Mujib.

But this time the army refused to cooperate with mutineers. Instead, both the public and the army started rallying behind the government at Dacca, which must be considered the best testimony to Zia's success and popularity. The government also got the support of the opposition parties, in particular of General M. A. G. Osmani, who was the founding father of the East Bengal Regiment (EBR). As a result, the government at Dacca, after the initial staggering near-knockout punch, quickly recovered its confidence and strength; proportionately, Manzoor's forces, obviously under strain and tension, began to lose morale very fast. Then Dacca promised a general amnesty to all those who surrendered, encouraging defections from Manzoor's ranks.

But while offering amnesty, Dacca was also preparing for a crackdown. Brig Hameed, who was adjutant to Zia in the 1971 liberation war and who had been posted to army headquarters in Dacca, was told to replace Manzoor in Chittagong and launch an offensive against him. From the morning of 31 May loyal troops started moving from

The coup desh

Bangladesh troops leaving Dacca for Chittagong on Sunday (31 May)

• 15 August 1975: A dawn coup ended the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. A group of serving and cashiered army officers, mostly of the rank of major, led the soldiers who killed all the members of Sheikh Mujib's immediate family who were with him in his Dhanmandi residence. Two of his daughters who were out of the country survived (one of them, Hasina, finally returned to Dacca recently). Mujib was succeeded by his minister for commerce, Khondaker Moshtaque Ahmed. Mujib, who became nascent Bangladesh's Prime Minister in January 1972, had assumed the title of President in January 1975, and arbitrarily made his Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL) the only legal party in the country. The army officers who had conspired against him did have their personal grievences, but they were also irked by the rank corruption in high places, the step-motherly treatment meted out to the army as compared to the Rakshi Bahini, the League's private militia, and by Mujib's radical programmes. The new President, Moshtaque Ahmed, formed a 16-member cabinet in which all but one were members of the earlier government. A spate of arrests by the new government sent five members of the previous cabinet, Syed Nazrul Islam, Mansoor Ali, Kamaruszaman, Abdus Samad and Korban Ali, and two erstwhile ministers, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, and Tajuddin Ahmed, to jail. Under martial law regulations they were charged with corruption, nepotism and abuse of power. The new government also appointed Major General Ziaur Rahman, the first Bengali officer to rebel against Pakistan, as the new chief of army staff.

• 3 November 1975: The group of army officers who had staged the coup against Mujib in August were themselves ousted in a bloodless coup by another group of army officers, led by Brigadier Khaled Musharraf, commander of the Dacca garrison. In the early hours of that day, Musharraf's men moved out of the Dacca cantonment and captured the air base and the civil aerodrome. Major General Zia and Air Vice-Marshal M. G. Toab, chief of air staff, were kept under house arrest. The "majors" of the previous coup held on to the presidential palace where they were lodged with Moshtaque, and in their frustration, ordered the brutal bayonsting to death of the goaled ministers. They negotiated with the new masters and bought their way out of the country, but Musharraf would not let Moshtaque, Zia and Toab leave Bangladesh. The prime protagonists of the August coup, Lt Col Farooq, Maj Shariful Huq (also known as Major Dalim) and Lt Col Rashid flew to Bangkok and were later granted asylum by Libya.

• 7 November 1975: Musharraf ruled for just four days. The morning of 7 November saw a mutiny by soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the Dacca cantonment. Musharraf and his supporters were killed. Zia was released from house arrest and the leadership handed over to him. Thus did Zia come to power. He became the chief of the armed forces and Chief Martial Law Administrator. Later, President Sayem, who had replaced Khandaker, was named CMLA while Zia became a deputy CMLA—a position which only partly cloaked the fact that he was the real strongman.

• 2 May 1976: Zia forced Air Vice-Marshal M. G. Toab chief of air staff and a Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator, to resign and leave the country. Toab, who had during the Pakistan days been sent to West Germany by the Pak Air Force, had joined a civil aviation company in West Germany as a test pilot, married a local girl, obtained German citizenship and even set up a flourishing business. Mujib brought him back to Bangladesh. After the 1975 coup he was made the new air chief by the coup leaders. But serious differences cropped up between Zia and him after the former took over in November 1975. Toab dreamt of replacing Zia with the support of Islamic nations; he even toured several countries to garner support. Late in April, when he returned from a trip to some Arab countries, Zia forced a showdown and asked him to quit. Caught on the wrong foot, Toab obliged. A Biman flight took him to London from where he quietly returned to his secure haven, West Germany. Zia had successfully worsted a rival.

• 29 September 1977: An entire batallion of the Bangladesh army revolted in Bogra cantonment. The mutineers were led by Lt Col Zaman, and the revolt occurred exactly when Gen Zia and the top brass of the army in Dacca were occupied with the hijacking of a JAL airliner to Dacca airport. The mutineers captured several senior officers posted at Bogra including Brigadier Hannan Shah, the local brigade commander, released political prisoners incarcerated in the local jail and were engaged in prolonged exchange of fire with troops loyal to Dacca and the local police force.

• 2 October 1977: The revolt by now had spread to Dacca. But Zia finally crushed the coup; at least 100 persons lost their lives. The revolt began at dawn at the cantonment and extended to the airport in the course of the day even as the hijacking drama climaxed and 60 hostages were released from the clutches of the Japanese Red Army. The rebel troops even managed to capture Dacca radio station for some hours before they were thrown out and Zia went on the air to announce that loyal troops had crushed the uprising. By 5 October, life was normal in Dacca and the revolt at Bogra too had been contained.

• 17 June 1980: While Zia was away on an official visit to Britain, a coup was attempted at the Dacca cantonment. Once again the revolt was swiftly crushed and Col Deedarul Alam, one of the coup leaders, went underground with some of his fellow conspirators. They were later arrested and, in March this year, after protracted court martial proceedings, sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

• 30 May 1981: The Chittagong coup. Zia died, but the mutiny was put down within days.

Dacca towards Chittagong and by the evening of the same day, one battalion supported by ten field guns reached Feni in Noakhali district, 54 kms from Chittagong. Reinforcements too reached from Comilla.

By the time the loyal troops had reached Feni from Dacca, about 1,000 soldiers from Manzoor's camp had deserted. But the biggest blow came when soldiers from the East Bengal Regiment also started deserting him (this could well have resulted from M. A. G. Osmani's appeal over the radio) and the commander of the 15th EBR overpowered all top officers (including the commanding officer) of one of the four brigades supporting Manzoor, after a brief clash at Bandarban. So overjoyed was Major General Ershad, the chief of army staff at this development that he promptly sent a message over the wireless congratulating the commander of the 15 EBR for his feat. At around the same time Brig Hameed landed in Chittagong in a helicopter.

It was then that Manzoor realised that he had lost and decided to flee. Where could he go? His choice was limited. He had no intention of going to the Chittagong hill tracts—not only because the terrain was rough, but because the Chakma insurgents, against whom he had conducted extensive operations, would have happily murdered him. He could not escape by sea as he did not have the navy, or even one ship with him. His only choice was to move towards India. If he was arrested in Bangladesh, he could be sure of a summarary execution. By going to India, he probably reckoned, he could at least buy time, though in all probability Indian forces would arrest and repatriate him. However, that was the only gamble left, there was nothing else he could do. Accordingly, he started moving with some of his aides towards Ramgarh, next to Sabrum, a border town in Tripura. He took off his uniform, but that did not help. Halfway to Sabrum, he was located at Keanko village in Fatikchari and arrested. While he was being escorted back by the police to Chittagong, he was killed by some unidentified armymen, who were angry at the assassination of Zia.

What led Maj Gen Manzoor Ahmed to risk a coup—failure of which meant certain death? The answer lies in the rivalries within the army and the feeling among some armymen that they were not getting their due share of power. This feeling became particularly intense when Ziaur Rahman (unlike his counterpart in Pakistan) shed his uniform and started building himself up as a civilian ruler heading a legitimate civilian, elected government; when he began the long, slow process of burying his past. Now rewards too were being diverted away from the armed forces. For example in the past few months the flow of Gulf money to Bangladesh had increased—following the government's greater involvement in the international Islamic movement—but the armed forces had

"Murder has played too large a part"

Ian Jack filed this report from Dacca on 2 June, the last date on which we could take copy. As is obvious, the fate of Manzoor Ahmed will be clear by the time this story is read, but the report gives an idea of the uncertainty that enveloped Dacca in the days just after the death of Zia.

Bangladesh has buried its murdered President. Yesterday in Dacca the crowds followed his coffin for two miles as it was tra[illegible]red by gun carriage from its [illegible]porary place of rest, the old National Assembly building, to its final destination, a burial plot near the new Parliament.

It happened at midday. Heat and humidity were intense, but hundreds of thousands of people made the journey, nearly all of them men. Officers and troops mingled with labourers. Their mood as they trudged through the mud was not easy to define. Some were purely curious, many shocked, all conveyed a sombreness which implied a fear for their country's future. "Murder has played too large a part in the history of Bangladesh," said one man, "and we realise it has to stop. We have killed too many of our leaders. As a people, we are being orphaned."

Certainly President Zia died in a most ghastly way. His body was discovered and brought back to Dacca on Monday. The coffin, smothered with flowers and joss sticks, lay outside the National Assembly building through the night. Lakhs of people queued to pay homage to a man who, in his own way, did his best to alleviate his country's peculiar and awful problems.

Mystery still surrounds the fate of the man who organised his death. According to yesterday's issue of the government-owned *Bangladesh Observer*, Major General Manzoor was caught by police and troops at 6.25 pm on Monday at Fatikchari, about 25 miles north of Chittagong city. The *Bangladesh Observer* said Manzoor left Chittagong at 3.35 am on Monday with his wife, two sons and a daughter. They drove north in two jeeps, only to be arrested at a place called Guimara by a police inspector called Kuddus, who summoned an army convoy to return them to Chittagong.

Two of his accomplices, Lt Col Fazle Hossain and Captain Jamil, were also said to have been arrested near Fatikchari. The circumstantial detail in this report lends it a truthful ring. It conflicts, however, with later reports yesterday which suggest that Manzoor is still free. Yesterday evening all that Bangladesh television would say was that Manzoor had "fled."

Late last night further reports from Chittagong, so far unconfirmed, said that Manzoor and his wife and three children had all been killed by troops in Chittagong cantonment after their capture near Fatikchari. Other late reports suggested that Manzoor had been injured in an ambush as the army drove him to Chittagong and had later died in an ambulance. These reports did not mention his family.

Zia's body lying in state at the Sangsad Bhavan. Dacca.

Ziaur Rahman: a profile

It was four in the morning of 4 November 1975: Major General Ziaur Rahman the Bangladesh army chief of staff, was woken up. Units of the Dacca Brigade, loyal to the chief of general staff, Brigadier Khaled Musharraf, had surrounded his residence. Yet another coup was underway and this time Zia was in trouble. Desperate, Zia telephoned one of his closest aides, a personal friend and battlefield comrade from the 11th sector, the one-legged Colonel Abu Taher. Could Taher, who was posted on the outskirts of Dacca, help his chief? Before he could complete the conversation, the telephone link snapped.

But by the early hours of 7 November, Colonel Taher had indeed rescued his general.And he went to meet Zia in the Second Field Artillery Headquarters, where Zia had been brought after the rescue: it was a touching scene. The two embraced each other and Zia loudly acknowledged that Taher was his saviour. However, by 23 November, this friendship was over. Now in power, Zia ordered the arrest of Taher; he was later sentenced to death by hanging by a military tribunal.

Zia, since he became chief of army staff, has seen a series of coups and counter-coups. And with calm ability, he survived each one of them. His military career was exemplary. Born at Bogra in 1936, he joined the Pakistani army in 1953. He was commissioned in 1955 and became an officer at the age of 19. He was transferred to the East Bengal Regiment in 1957. Between 1959 to 1964, he was with the army intelligence unit.

During the 1965 India-Pakistan war he was commander of the First East Bengal Regiment which saw action in the Khemkaran sector. By 1966, he had been made an instructor in the Pakistan Military Academy in Kabul. In the same year he joined the Staff College in Quetta. In 1969 he returned to East Pakistan, as second-in-command of the Second East Bengal Regiment in Joydebpur. By October 1970 he had been transferred to the Eighth East Bengal Regiment in Chittagong.

After the Pakistan army crackdown in March 1971, Zia deserted the Pakistani army and took refuge in India. In India he was given charge of the irregular forces drawn from the soldiers of the First, Third and Eight Bengal Regiments. This brigade came to be known as the "Z" force.

1971 saw a change in Zia's life. On 27 March 1971, he set an example of heroism not only for the army but also for the people of Bangladesh. He was one of the first Bengali officers to revolt against the Pakistani army openly. Even as the crackdown began he seized control of Radio Chittagong, and made the now famous broadcast declaring, unilaterally, that Bangladesh was now independent.

After liberation in December 1971, Zia was made the commander of the Comilla Brigade. In 1971, he became a Colonel and the deputy chief of army staff. On 10 October 1973 he was made a Major General. When Khondakar Moshtaque Ahmed took over as President after Mujibur Rahman's assassination, Major General Ziaur Rahman was made the army chief of staff replacing Major General K. M. Shafiullah. When the dust of coup and countercoup settled, Zia was one of the survivors—in fact, Ziaur Rahman became the deputy chief martial law administrator. Almost a year later, on 29 November 1976, Major General Zia became the chief martial law administrator and by April 1977, he had done enough to be sworn in as the President. He then shed his military garb and formed his own political party, the Jatiyatabadi Gonotantrik Dal (Jagodal) to fight the Presidential election (which he had called) in June 1977. Zia won with a massive majority defeating his nearest rival, former commander of Bangladesh forces during the war of liberation, General M. A. G. Osmany, by more than 11 million votes.

In December 1978, Zia, now a civilian, revoked all "undemocratic provisions" of the Constitutional amendment brought by Sheikh Mujib in 1975. He ordered the release of many political prisoners. Then, in the general elections of February 1979, Zia's newly formed political party, (the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, he had been elected its chairman in September 1978) won an overwhelming 207 of the 300 seats in the Jatiyo Sangsad (Parliament).

Zia's 19-point programme

- The independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country should be maintained at any cost.
- Four major principles of administration should be : Belief in all-powerful Allah, democracy, nationalism and economic equality for all.
- Self-reliance.
- The people should be encouraged to take part in the administration, development programmes and maintenance of law and order.
- Strengthening the economy, particularly the rural economy, must be a top priority.
- Self-reliance in food and equitable distribution must be achieved.
- Clothes for all.
- Housing for all.
- Illiteracy must be eradicated.
- Primary health-care for all.
- Women and youth must be given their rights.
- Help should be given to private enterprise to improve the economy of the country.
- Workers must get more benefits To raise production better relations should be built up between labourers and managements.
- Government employees should be better paid—and become more honest and dedicated.
- Population must be curbed.
- Build up friendly relations with all foreign countries and strengthen relationship with Muslim countries.
- Decentralise administration and strengthen local self-government.
- Efforts should be made to build up a corruptionless and law-abiding society.
- Respect the rights of all citizens irrespective of caste, creed or religion and strengthen national integrity.

not [illegible] from it. The money had instead begun to be used to build strong civilian support for Zia. This the army resented, especially as it is a politicised army—having taken part in not only the liberation movement, but also the creation of successive governments.

Besides, the Bangladesh army is itself faction-ridden. The first tensions in the army resulted from the antagonism between those who had fought the liberation war and those who were in Pakistan and joined the Bangladesh army only after the country had become independent. Later, after the death of Mujib, when Zia came to power the range and intensity of internal rivalries escalated, intensified, with almost every senior army officer vying for positions of authority now that the army was directly in power. Though Zia kept the situation under control by playing one ambition against the other, he was in fact skating on thin ice. This is evident from the number of coups that were attempted during his tenure as president.

When Zia finally gave up the post of chief of army staff in 1978, an open fight began between the officers in the top echelons of the army for this powerful job. It was quite clear by now that the chief of army staff had immense potential to wield power. Zia too realised this and accordingly transferred people he considered ambitious away from Dacca. For the chief of army staff he chose Maj Gen H. M. Ershad, whose main qualification was his sensible lack of ambition. It is for the same reason that Maj Gen Manzoor Ahmed was transferred to Chittagong early this year, causing the anger which finally exploded in the assassination.

The death of Zia leaves Bangladesh in another phase of uncertainty. The Bangladesh National Party, which consists of disparate political elements, had been held together by the power and personality of Zia, who had formed the party. There is no one in the party now who can step into Zia's shoes. It is therefore unlikely that factions within the BNP—especially the Bengali nationalists and the Islamic fundamentalists—will work harmoniously. Any political chaos would give the army (which has no shortage of ambitious majors) an opportunity to grab power again. After all, whatever the arguments between army officers, they are united on one point: all of them would like more power. ■

The future of Indo-Bangla relations

London 1977: Zia with Morarji Desai

The love-love days of Mujib could not rationally be expected to last, nor did they succeed Mujib. On the other hand, the hate-hate rhetoric whipped up by Zia in his initial phase in power was equally irrational. An anti-India image might have provided Zia with a bit of passing popularity in a Bangladesh doused by propaganda, but without normal relations with India it was only Bangladesh which could be the greater loser.

However, India—that Very Big Brother—is inevitably a target for Bangladesh politicians trying to manipulate public opinion. After all, there is a history strewn with suspicion, and paradoxically the liberation of Bangladesh, far from ending that suspicion, only in the end, served to fuel it further. Bangladesh never felt quite certain whether the hug from India was an expression of joy or an effort to smother the country's independence. Moreover, all post Mujib governments could never rid themselves of the fear that India would do unto them what they had done unto a friend of India: the danger of an Indian-inspired coup was constantly on their minds.

The inflated tension generated over the New Moore island was a classic case of foreign policy being used to serve domestic ends. Sheikh Mujib's daughter Begum Hasina had arrived in Dacca to a tumultous welcome—and although Zia was firmly in the saddle (legitimately) he could hardly fail to ignore the public demonstration in favour of Hasina. So once again the India card was brought out, particularly since Hasina had been in comfortable exile in India all these years. The slogan of Bengali nationalism was dusted and displayed in an effort to subdue the rising expectations of the Awami League.

Curiously, Zia began and ended his spell of power with hate-India campaigns. However, the Moore island controversy did hide a fundamental truth: that relations between India and Bangladesh had reached a point of mature stability. India had come to recognise and appreciate Zia's efforts to convert his country into a democracy.

The very fact that Mrs Hasina was allowed into Bangladesh speaks of the confidence of the Zia government in its ability to handle a democratic challenge. Zia too seemed convinced by now that Mrs Gandhi was willing to let existing governments lie.

But the immediate reaction to the news of Zia's assassination was entirely predictable: the first suspicion that arose in many minds was of Indian involvement. The manner in which both New Delhi and Dacca handled the crisis once again reflects the new maturity. New Delhi made every effort to display its support to the legal government in Dacca even before it was clear whether Manzoor Ahmed had succeeded or failed. And Dacca responded by praising and thanking New Delhi for its support, and for gestures like flying the flag at half-mast in mourning.

India can live with an unfriendly government in Dacca if need be; it cannot feel happy about an unstable government there. The reason is obvious enough—the north east, and the special problems of populations and insurgency in that region that are closely related to Bangladesh. What must be worrying New Delhi is the prospect of chaos. Sighs of relief will be audible across the subcontinent if the succession to Zia is settled smoothly, and the new government begins to function effectively. The last thing India wants there is another coup.

There is one aspirant to the Dacca throne still sitting in India—Kader Siddiqui with his myriad band of followers. Obviously Dacca would like to see Mr Siddiqui (still cashing in on his nickname 'Tiger' acquired during the liberation) in some uncomfortable Dacca jail. One news agency added to the tension by erroneously reporting that it was Siddiqui who was behind the death of Zia. But though Siddiqui is likely to hang around Delhi in the foreseeable future, it would be a rash Indian government that would try to plant him in Dacca with the help of Indian arms.

What will interest New Delhi much more is the fate of Begum Hasina. She on behalf of the Awami League has condemned the coup attempt and pleaded for the continuation of democracy. This is what the government in Dacca wants too. And this is clearly what Delhi also wants.

Is a fourth Indo-Pak war round the corner?

Zia-ul Haq will only risk it if he has nuclear muscle, says Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

IS an India-Pakistan war around the corner? Our armed forces are maintaining a high level of preparedness, just in case. But most defence analysts in New Delhi feel that unless Pakistan acquires nuclear capability, it will not embark on a military adventure against us, solely on the basis of conventional weapons. But a view from the West that is making the rounds says that India and the Soviet Union may collude to dismember Pakistan by attacking it from both sides. This theory, however, is not supported by the realities of Indo-Soviet relations. Mrs Gandhi may recognise the Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea and rebuff Britain's Mrs Margaret Thatcher when she comes to Delhi, but certainly on the question of Soviet presence in Afghanistan she has made her position clear too by saying that an early withdrawal of Soviet troops is desirable. To say, therefore, that India would collude with the Soviet Union is stretching a whim too far.

The West has taken a particular interest in Pakistan since the Eisenhower days. President Eisenhower favoured Pakistan because it was willing to let the Americans set up bases to eavesdrop on the Soviet Union. In return Eisenhower gave Pakistan a place in SEATO and the CENTO (from both of which Pakistan has now withdrawn, because it has become "non-aligned." Moreover, with Saudi Arabia's petrodollars at its command, Pakistan does not need to join military blocs any more to get arms.) The only phase when India and the West seemed to draw together was during the Kennedy era in Washington, when following the 1962 Chinese aggression the USA promised substantial assistance to India, both military and economic. But the USA went back on its promises when India refused to accept the strings attached to this aid. (It was only after this that India turned to USSR for arms.) Later, particularly in the Nixon days, when China slowly emerged as a functional ally of the USA, a Sino-US-Pak axis began to emerge. Today, with the Soviet troops sitting in Afghanistan, and with the possibility that the Soviets could want to push southwards, via Baluchistan, to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf, Pakistan assumes a renewed importance in the West's strategy. That explains why the USA is prepared to legitimise Islamabad's nuclear programme, and arm Pakistan.

Though the West says that its military assistance to Pakistan is aimed against a Soviet threat, even the Pakistanis may find it difficult to accept this as the full truth. In September 1980, the Rand Corporation of the USA undertook a study, on the Pentagon's behalf, on the security of Pakistan (in the USA, private corporations undertake such studies, which are utilised by the armament manufacturers as well as by the US administration in its policy planning). This particular Rand note (No. N-1584-RC) assumes great importance today because its author, Francis Fukuyama, is now a member of the policy planning staff of the US state department. Fukuyama was fully helped by the Pakistan government and he had detailed talks with the Pak army top brass. Discussing Pakistan's attitude to India, Fukuyama wrote (on page 8 of his report) that, "Pakistan's own force deployments reflect its continuing preoccupation with India. Of the Pakistani army's six corps headquarters, only one (with two infantry divisions) is located along the Afghan border. The remaining five, which control all the country's armour, face India. When US national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski visited Pakistan in February 1980, he suggested an internal redeployment from the east to the west to meet the new Soviet-Afghan threat. This was rejected out of hand: the Pakistanis argued that the force imbalance in the east (facing India) was bad enough already and there was no evidence that India's intentions had softened since the Soviet intervention. Nor would it be possible to deploy forces along the Afghan border and move them eastward in an emergency, the infrastructure for moving heavy equipment across the country does not exist..."

So, even American policy planners admit that Pakistan's main preoccupation is with India. The Fukuyama report clearly proves that while the Americans want the Pakistanis to get ready for a war with the Soviet-Afghan forces, the Pakistanis seem to shy away from such a proposition, and want to use the current tension to build up their offensive and defensive ability against India.

One possibility discussed by Fukuyama in his report merits serious consideration. He sees a war in the region if the Soviet-Afghan troops cross over to Pakistan in hot pursuit of the Afghan rebels, especially those who have taken shelter in Pakistan. He visualises that, in such a contingency, India, "acting as a Soviet proxy," may open the eastern front of Pakistan, and India and the USSR together may go on to dismember Pakistan and create an independent Baluchistan while India goes on to annex West Punjab and Sind to "undo the 1947 partition." Though this may sound tempting for local chauvinists, particularly those of the RSS variety, a serious consideration would show how unrealistic Fukuyama's projection is. To begin with, after Afghanistan, it would be only a foolhardy Indian government which would like to share a common frontier with the USSR. Indo-Soviet friendship, ranging from Bhilai to Bokaro and right into space (when the Russian rocket launched our first satellite Aryabhatta) notwithstanding, a handshaking border with the USSR is considered dangerous by most Indian defence planners. Pakistan as a buffer state, therefore, is very much in the Indian interest, they feel.

India and Pakistan have no outstanding dispute today, barring the tussle over Kashmir, which India does not consider to be disputed territory. Time and again leaders have thought aloud on the question of recognising the present line of control in Jammu and Kashmir as the international boundary. And, so far, there seems to have been wide acceptance of such a solution in India. Only the Pakistanis want to keep the Kashmiri issue alive. India had occupied large portions of Pakistani territory in both the 1965 and the 1971 wars but on both occasions these territories were returned. The theory circulated by the West, that India wants to "undo the 1947 partition," therefore, falls flat.

IN a war between India and Pakistan, as things stand today, Pakistan stands to lose rather than gain anything. To begin with, most of Pakistan's industry, railways and centres of population lie on a line running north to south from Islamabad to Karachi. Almost 200 miles of Pakistani heartland lies just across the Indian border. Barring the line of actual control in Jammu and Kashmir, which is mountainous, the rest of the Indo-Pak border has no natural obstacles. This means that the country which has superiority in mechanised warfare has the definite advantage. India has many more tanks than Pakistan: though the *Military Balance* published by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, says Pakistan has 1,000 tanks against 1,850 with India, experts say that India's actual armoured strength is slightly over 2,000 tanks and that of Pakistan around 800.

A comparative analysis of the strengths of the two countries, in air and ground warfare, would show who is favourably placed. (The study is based on figures printed in the *Military Balance*, 1979-80, published by IISS, London. The naval strengths are not being compared because in an Indo-Pak conflict, naval engagements cannot decide the outcome of the war.)

In the field of mechanised warfare, not only does India outnumber Pakistan in terms of tanks, but, more importantly, India's armour consists mainly of the Russian made T-72 tanks (with 125 mm guns) and the indigenously manufactured Vijayantas (with 105 mm guns). (The other tanks like the T-55s are being upgraded to 105 mm guns in the army base workshops.) The Pakistani armour, on the other hand, comprises mainly Chinese T-59s (with 100 mm guns) and vintage American Pattons (90 mm guns). Pakistan has a skeleton defence production capability and therefore it cannot go in for modification of its armour without foreign help. Though Pakistan is attempting to close the gap, defence experts say that for the next two to three years the balance in terms of armour would remain in India's favour.

Even the Fukuyama report admitted Indian superiority in terms of both armour and aircraft. It noted that while India had a formidable modern inventory, thanks largely to its indigenous sources of production like the Hindustan Aircraft Ltd and the Indian ordnance factories and Russian supplies, the Pakistani inventory, in contrast, was based largely on the American and Chinese technologies of the 1950s. In fact, the Fukuyama report indirectly paid tribute to Indian planning when it admitted that India has a “rather large domestic arms industry;”and in contrast “the Pakistanis have no indigenous arms manufacturing capabilities to speak of, the Chinese gave them a heavy rebuild facility to service their T-55/59 fleet, but Pakistan lacks the high-quality steel needed for the castings.”

In air power, India unfortunately has so far stressed more on building up defensive capabilities than deep-strike aircraft. We have only a limited number of Jaguars for deep-penetration strikes within Pakistani territory as compared to the Pakistani Mirages. (India is also planning to buy an advanced version of the Mirage now.) But in terms of defensive air cover, India has an edge over Pakistan.

So, given the possibilities of a conventional war, India can do more damage to Pakistan than the reverse. Even geographic conditions, in certain places, go against Pakistan. For example, the dams built across the rivers in north western India. Except for the Rana Pratap Sagar dam, the waters of all other dams in this region flow into Pakistan. Even an accidental Pakistani air strike on our dams, therefore, will ultimately cause flood havoc within Pakistan itself. Pakistan has only one major port—Karachi. All that India has to try and do in the event of war is to destroy the harbour, thereby cutting off Pakistan's maritime supplies altogether. Pakistan, on the other hand, cannot do similar damage to India because India is not dependent on one port only.

	Pakistan	**India**	**Ratio**
Division equivalents	20	31	1 : 1.5
Medium tanks	1,000	1,850	1 : 1.9
Armoured Personnel carriers	550	700	1 : 1.4
Combat aircraft	256	620	1 : 2.4
Army manpower	429,000	1,096,000	1 : 2.6

The Pakistani nuclear programme, therefore, has to be viewed in the context of this strategic weakness. Despite the peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) seven years ago, India has not manufactured the bomb. Pakistan's nuclear activities at the Kahuta-Sihala complex, however, are definitely for military purposes. If Pakistan acquires the bomb while India does not have it, it will give Pakistan a tremendous strategic boost. A noted American scholar on south Asian affairs, Stephen P. Cohen, who recently visited Pakistan and held discussions with its military leaders, has stated that Pakistanis are seriously considering acquiring nuclear weapons because, “this would, according to many Pakistanis, neutralise an assumed Indian nuclear force. Others point out, however, that it would provide the umbrella under which Pakistan could reopen the Kashmir issue. Pakistani nuclear capability paralyses not only the Indian nuclear decision but also Indian conventional forces and a brash, bold, Pakistani strike to liberate Kashmir might go unchallenged if the Indian leadership was weak or indecisive.”

Pakistan with nuclear weapons would neutralise India's superiority, in conventional warfare. The initiative will certainly pass into the hands of Pakistan. Pakistan's nuclear strategy seems to have been drawn up on the basis of the French and Israeli doctrines of “proportionate deterrence.” According to this doctrine, though the USSR could completely destroy France, its nuclear weapons stockpile (the French have the nuclear capability of destroying only a few Russian cities) is enough to deter a possible Russian nuclear attack, since even the loss of a few cities would be an unacceptable risk for the Russians. Israel too has reportedly developed a strategy to deter the Soviet Union from directly intervening against it. Perhaps, the Pakistani strategists are planning to deter both the USSR and India, besides making their nuclear weapons available to the Arabs as a deterrent against Israel, which most probably possesses a nuclear arsenal. Indian experts feel that even if Pakistan were to develop a small nuclear arsenal of a few kilotons capacity, which could be delivered by its Mirages, it would be in a position to take the plunge against India without fear of defeat. In such a contingency, the Pakistani threat of using a nuclear weapon could have disastrous consequences for. For example, if a well-orchestrated propaganda were to be broadcast by Pakistan radio that it was about to drop a bomb somewhere in Punjab, it would create panic and confusion among people of that state. It could even lead to an exodus from Punjab, which provides a large number of men to the armed forces. The army's morale, too, could be affected.

But without the nuclear arsenal, it seems unlikely that Pakistan would undertake a military adventure against India in the near future. When this reporter approached Mr K. Subrahmanyam, a former chairman of the joint intelligence committee and the director of New Delhi's Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, on the question of an immediate war with Pakistan, he said, “The Pakistani army today is the only all-Pakistani institution left in that country, with the others having been decimated between the army and the late president Bhutto. If the Pakistani army were to launch a war against India, and if it were to be defeated, its impact, with reference to its special position in that country as well as the unity and integrity of Pakistan, could be serious indeed. Therefore, in terms of purely rational considerations, a Pakistani offensive can be ruled out. But Pakistan acquiring nuclear weapons capability can certainly upset all rational calculations.”

With India needing Pakistan as a buffer state and therefore, not willing to “collude” with the USSR in “dismembering” Pakistan and with Pakistan not having, as of today, a nuclear arsenal, there seems to be no imminent threat of a fifth Indo-Pak war. But the chances of a war cannot be totally ruled out simply on the basis of reason. With hawks ruling at Washington, one cannot rule out the possibility of some 40,000 or more armed Afghan tribesmen being advised to march into Afghanistan and thus forcing the Soviet army to chase them out or even march into Pakistan. That will give the

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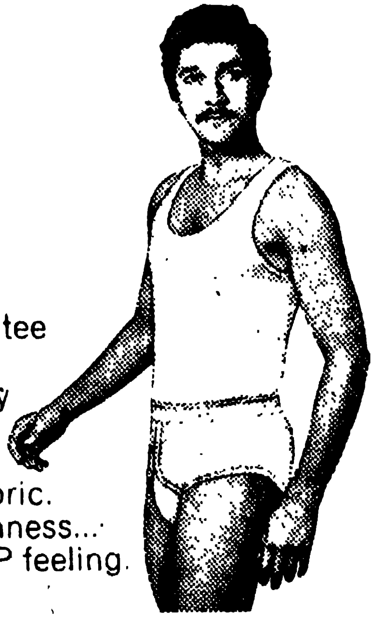

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Americans the much desired opportunity of activating their rapid deployment force and perhaps even walking into this region as international policemen—as they have done in many parts of the world in the past. A war on our frontiers too, could be a possibility. And the outcome of such a war, with super-power rivalry on our doorsteps, could be disastrous.

One way out of the crisis is Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan—perhaps on the pattern of Finland. (Soviet troops had occupied Finland between 1948 to 1955, but there was a phased withdrawal. By 1955 there were no Russian troops on Finnish soil, and a capitalist system has been thriving there since. By the 1948 treaty, however, Moscow has retained its right to re-enter Finland "in the event of Finland, or the Soviet Union, across the borders of Finland, becoming the subject of military aggression.") Perhaps the Finlandisation of Afghanistan could ease the mounting tensions in our region. But Finlandisation of Afghanistan cannot be accomplished without the neutralisation of Pakistan and Iran on the lines of Austria. When the American expert on south Asia affairs, Selig Harrison, during a recent visit to India, put this idea before Mrs Gandhi, she is reported to have said that if Pakistan could be persuaded to accept neutralisation, it would not be difficult to persuade Soviet Union to agree to the Finlandisation of Afghanistan.

Indians don't want war, but...

We commissioned Pathfinders: India to conduct a survey in the four metropolitan cities to find out the attitude of the people to a war with Pakistan. Public opinion is divided on the possibilities of a war. 40% in Bombay said yes while 49% disagreed with the idea. 32% in Madras expected a war in the near future while 49% didn't. The east seems to believe a war is imminent (58% saying yes), followed by the north (52% saying yes).

There is a general consensus that the recently promised US military aid to Pakistan will be used against India. Around 60% of the respondents in the cities seem to think so, while only about a fourth of the respondents disagreeing with the idea.

The USA is definitely seen as the guardian angel of Pakistan. A majority of the respondents feels that in the case of an Indo-Pak war, the USA will definitely aid Pakistan. 62% in Bombay, 58% in Calcutta, 63% in Delhi and 50% in Madras expressed this view.

Public opinion is divided about the possibilities of Pakistan using nuclear weapons against India. The west and the east seem to believe that Pakistan will not use nuclear weapons against India. 48% and 52% saying no in Bombay and Calcutta, as against 35% and 32% saying yes. The north and the south are inclined to believe that Pakistan will use nuclear weapons against India. 48% in Delhi and 51% in Madras said yes, while 42% and 33% said no.

In spite of the misgivings about Pakistan, an overwhelming majority of the people do not want a war with it. It is peaceful coexistence that is uppermost in the minds of Indians. 88% in Bombay, 95% in Calcutta, 85% in Delhi and 89% in Madras said that they do not want a war with Pakistan.

Q		BOMBAY	CALCUTTA	DELHI	MADRAS	MALES	FEMALES	AGE (YRS) 18-25	AGE (YRS) 26-40	AGE (YRS) OVER 40
Do you think that there will be a war between India & Pakistan in the near future?	YES	40	58	52	32	47	43	51	47	36
	NO	49	30	32	49	41	40	39	36	48
	NO IDEA	11	12	16	19	12	17	10	17	16
Do you think that the recent US military aid to Pakistan will be used against India?	YES	63	63	65	58	68	57	63	60	69
	NO	27	22	25	26	22	27	26	28	16
	NO IDEA	10	15	10	16	10	16	11	12	15
In case of war with India do you think USA will side with Pakistan?	YES	62	58	63	50	64	52	60	60	54
	NO	27	17	22	34	23	27	24	24	25
	NO IDEA	11	25	15	16	13	21	16	16	21
In case of a war do you think Pakistan will use nuclear weapons?	YES	35	32	48	51	41	42	43	43	38
	NO	48	52	42	33	48	39	41	46	47
	NO IDEA	17	16	10	16	11	19	16	11	15
Do you want a war with Pakistan?	YES	9	4	12	8	12	5	9	8	7
	NO	88	95	85	89	85	93	89	90	88
	NO IDEA	3	1	3	3	3	2	2	2	5

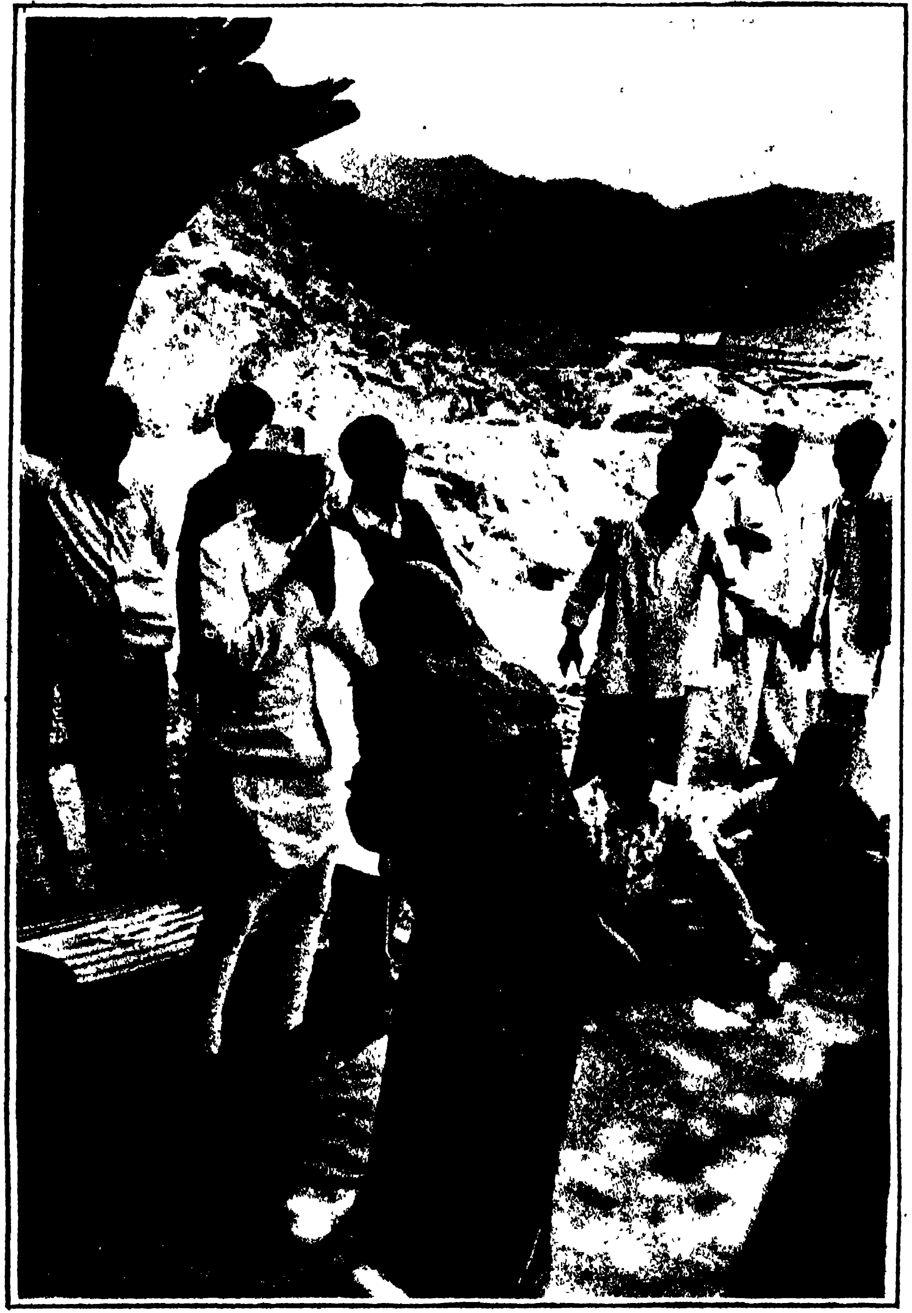
(Sample size. 800. equally distributed among males and females, randomly selected representing different age groups and educational levels)

SPECIAL REPORT

Garhwal: Can Bahuguna save his future?

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya went to the foot of the Himalayas to report a crucial by-election.

H. N. Bahuguna campaigning



Garhwal is one of the most picturesque Lok Sabha constituencies—and also one of the most difficult from the electioneering point of view. Most of the constituency lies in the Himalayas, stretching from Lachhmanjhoola near Rishikesh in the south to Badrinath and Kedarnath in the north. There are few metalled roads and most villages are connected by dirt tracks which wind their way up the hills and down into the intermittent valleys. In some places there are no roads at all. To reach some remote villages, distances of up to 24 kms of hilly tracts have to be covered on foot. All these make Garhwal a unique constituency. And this uniqueness is also reflected in the coming by-election. Normally, by-elections are necessitated by the death of a member, or, the unseating of the elected representative by a court order. But Garhwal is going to the polls for the second time within 18 months because the last representative elected by it to the Lok Sabha created Parliamentary history by resigning his seat while leaving the Congress(I), on whose ticket he had been elected in the January 1980 polls.

The defection in May last year of Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna, who was invited by Mrs Gandhi to join her party on the eve of the last Lok Sabha elections and appointed as her party's secretary-general, was embarrassing for Mrs Gandhi. And if Mr Bahuguna gets re-elected from the same seat in the by-poll it will be even more embarrassing for her. For, Mr Bahuguna's political stand in the past one year would be vindicated. Again at least some Congress(I) MPs may start wondering whether they too had won the January 1980 polls on their own merits, like Mr Bahuguna, and not merely because they had been allotted the Congress(I) symbol. This is the aspect which worries Mrs Gandhi most. Therefore, breaking tradition, the Prime Minister scheduled as many as 34 meetings in the Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency during her two-phase, four-day tour of the area on 28 and 29 May and 7 and 8 June.

Never before has a PM promised so many meetings in a Lok Sabha by-election. In fact, even during the general elections, the Prime Minister did not find time to address as many meetings in one particular Lok Sabha constituency. But in Garhwal the PM flew around in Air Force helicopters and landed at helipads which were specially constructed for these visits. She told the hardworking hill people why they ought to keep Mr Bahuguna out of the Lok Sabha. The PM's visits kept two IAF helicopters engaged—one as a standby. And at least 6,000 personnel of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) had to be deployed each day for security arrangements. The cost of operating the helicopters, the police arrangements, building new helipads, etc., for the 34 meetings came to around one crore rupees. And that shows how valuable Mr Bahuguna's defeat is to the Congress(I).

Whether Mr Bahuguna wins or loses the election, he has certainly emerged in the past one year as an opposition politician whom Mrs Gandhi wants to keep out of Parliament. This is no mean achievement for a man who does not have any viable political party at his command. Mr Bahuguna has extensively toured the country in the past year and held an impressive convention of his "Democratic Socialist Front" (which has ten MPs at present) at Bombay in January this year. The Garhwal by-poll has become the high watermark in his chequered political career.

Mr Bahuguna belongs to Garhwal. His family, *shandilya gotra* brahmins from Burdwan district in West Bengal migrated some centuries back and became the *kulgurus* of the local ruling family. But Mr Bahuguna's political career has mostly been restricted to Allahabad. Even his permanent address is 12-B Hastings Road, Allahabad. He contested an election from Garhwal for the first time in January 1980 and defeated his nearest Janata rival, Mr Pratap Singh Pushpwan, by a margin of 1,26,000 votes. (Mr Pushpwan, a former Jana Sanghi, is now with the BJP.) By the time the Vidhan Sabha elections in UP came up last year Mr Bahuguna's differences with Mrs Gandhi, within the Congress(I), were coming to the surface. None of his men got tickets. Undaunted he fielded rebel independent candidates.

In the five Assembly segments which constitute the Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency, Mr Bahuguna put up four candidates, of whom three won. The biggest margin of victory in the area was that of Mr Bahuguna's lieutenant, Mr Shivanand Nautiyal, who won the Karnaprayag seat by over 24,000 votes. Mr Bahuguna's men, Mr Kunwar Singh Negi and Mr Narendra Singh Bhandari, won the Chamauli and Pauri seats, respectively, by 6,000 and 1,500 votes. Mr Bahuguna's Congress(I) rival in the present elections, Uttar Pradesh's hill development minister, Mr Chander Mohan Singh Negi, defeated Mr Bharat Singh, who was supported by Mr Bahuguna at Lansdowne by a narrow margin of around 900 votes. Mr Bahuguna did not field a rebel candidate at Dehradun, which was won by the Congress(I)'s Dwarka Nath Dhawan by an overwhelming majority of around 20,000 votes. But here too, Mr Bahuguna had extended his support to an independent, Mr Nityanand Swami, who finished second, securing around 12,000 votes. If sheer arithmetic of the votes polled in the last Vidhan Sabha elections can be taken as an indicator, then Mr Bahuguna fared better than Mrs Gandhi: even at the height of the Indira Gandhi wave last summer, Mr Bahuguna's men had polled a total of 79,264 votes in the four constituencies (Karnaprayag, Chamauli, Pauri and Lansdowne) as against the Congress(I)'s 53,848 votes. Even if the Dehradun votes are taken into account, Mr Bahuguna retains a lead of around 6,000 votes over the Congress(I). Though it may be hazardous to reduce election prospects to cold arithmetic, the voting figures of the last poll clearly indicate that Mr Bahuguna has an edge.

Though Mr Bahuguna had never contested elections from Garhwal before 1980, he had nursed his home area judiciously in his days as the chief minister of UP, between 1974 and 1976 (he was removed from that post at the behest of Mr Sanjay Gandhi and Mr Narayan Dutt Tiwari replaced him). As chief minister, he created a separate ministry for hill development and provided it with its own budget. UP is the only state where two annual budgets are presented to the Vidhan Sabha every year—the general budget and the hill areas' budget. In addition, he created the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam, which, apart from looking after developmental activities, also promotes tourism in the area, thus giving the local people a means of livelihood. For improving drinking water supply in the area, Mr Bahuguna created an autonomous Uttarakhand Jal Sarvaraha Nigam. To improve educational facilities, he made an offer to the local private educational institutions that if they wanted, the government could take them over and provide better facilities to students and higher pay to the staff. Many schools benefited from this. A Garhwal university was set up at Sri-

The election office of Chandramohan Singh Negi in Srinagar

nagar, on the banks of the Alakananda. Hill roads too were developed. Even as Union Petroleum Minister, Mr Bahuguna provided Indane cooking gas agencies to the hill areas. So, throughout his career as a politician, Mr Bahuguna has nursed Garhwal. And the years of patient, strategic planning may pay dividends this year.

The Congress(I) candidate is undoubtedly the best man available to the party in the area. Mr Chander Mohan Singh Negi was in the Congress(O) and was one of the pradesh general secretaries of the party when the Emergency was declared in 1975. Under Mr Bahuguna's chief ministership, Mr Negi became a MISA detenu. After his release from jail, he was approached by both Mr Bahuguna (on behalf of the CFD-Janata combine) and by Mr Dharam Vir Sinha on behalf of the Congress for the Garhwal Lok Sabha ticket. But he chose to defect to Mrs Gandhi's party, despite being a close associate of the late C. B. Gupta. He, however, lost the election to CFD's Jagannath Sharma. In the 1980 Assembly poll he contested the Lansdowne seat, which had earlier returned his father, Late Jagmohan Singh Negi (a former food minister of UP) and won by a narrow margin. Mr Negi was initially given seven portfolios, including hill development, as a minister of state, in the V. P. Singh government. But now he retains only the hill development portfolio. He was reluctant to contest the election against Mr Bahuguna. Moreover, he had recently suffered a mild heart attack. But his party forced him to contest and he has been assured a responsible position in the centre if he wins. (The Congress(I) handbills distributed in Pauri state this).

Significantly, Mr Bahuguna, in his speeches, is not making any personal attacks on his rival. When we followed Mr Bahuguna on the election trail, we found him confining his attacks to Mrs Gandhi only. "*Woh hamare dost ke bete hain, aur bete-saman hain. Agar hamne parvatiya vikas mantralaya nahin banaya hota to hamare bete Chander Mohan Singh ko yeh pad kaise milta?* (He is my friend's son and like a son to me. Had I not created the hill development ministry, how could our son Chander Mohan Singh get this post?)" The message goes down well. Without denigrating Mr Negi, Mr Bahuguna expresses his superiority over the rival in personal terms. "*Woh kahte hain ki Indiraji ke haath mazboot karo. Yeh kaisa durbal haath hai jise, baar baar mazboot karna parta hai?* (They say strengthen Mrs Gandhi's hands. How weak is that hand that we have to strengthen it time and again?)" Mr Bahuguna asks. Then he puts a question to the crowds: "*Kiska haath mazboot karna chahiye—Indiraji ka ya Bharat ka?* (Whose hands should be strengthened, Mrs Gandhi's or India's?)" The answer is unanimous: "*Bharat ka* (India's)." Mr Bahuguna has made his point.

Mr Bahuguna has done his homework well. In his extensive tours in the past year he has made his reasons for leaving the Congress(I) clear to the people. "If I loved the chair, like Indira Gandhi does, should I have resigned my seat and come back to you to explain my point of view? You had sent me to the Lok Sabha for five years, but I have come back to seek your mandate within 18 months because I feel what I have done is right and you must put your stamp of approval on it," Mr Bahuguna tells the electorate. He reminds them that it was a man from Garhwal, Havildar Chander Singh Garhwali, who led a contingent of 90 armymen at Peshawar in 1930 which defied the British officers and refused to fire on unarmed tribals. He tells them that the revolt of Havildar Chander Singh Garhwali had changed the course of history and the revolt by Bahuguna, if supported by the electorate, could have similar ramifications. "*Main pad lene ke liye nahin khara hoon, main khara hoon Bharat ki aatma ke virodh ka pratik ban kar. Pahle isi kshetra se rishi muni awaz dete the, samaj badalta tha. Aaj bhi samaj ko aur rajniti ko badalne ka mauka aapko mila hai* (I am not contesting to get a position of power. I am standing as a symbol of the revolt of the Indian soul. In the past, the sages used to give clarion calls from this area and society used to change. Today again the people of this area have got an opportunity to change society and national politics.)" He tells the voters that Mrs Gandhi has an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha, so another seat will not make a difference to her but if he wins, it will lend a helping hand to the opposition. "*Aam chunao mein sarkar banane ka sawal hota hai. Upchunao mein par ankhush lagane ka mauka hota hai...*(In the general elections the question is of forming the government, but by-elections are the opportunity for expressing dissatisfaction with the government)," Mr Bahuguna tells the voters and then goes on to count the failures of the government and warns that if Mr Negi wins, Mrs Gandhi will think that all her policies are correct.

Before Mr Bahuguna announced his candidature, the monthly sugar quota used to be 250 grammes per head, now it has been increased to two kgs (half of it in *khandsari*, half crystal sugar). Mr Bahuguna points this out and asks whether Mrs Gandhi's government had paid so much attention to the area in the past. "If my candidature alone

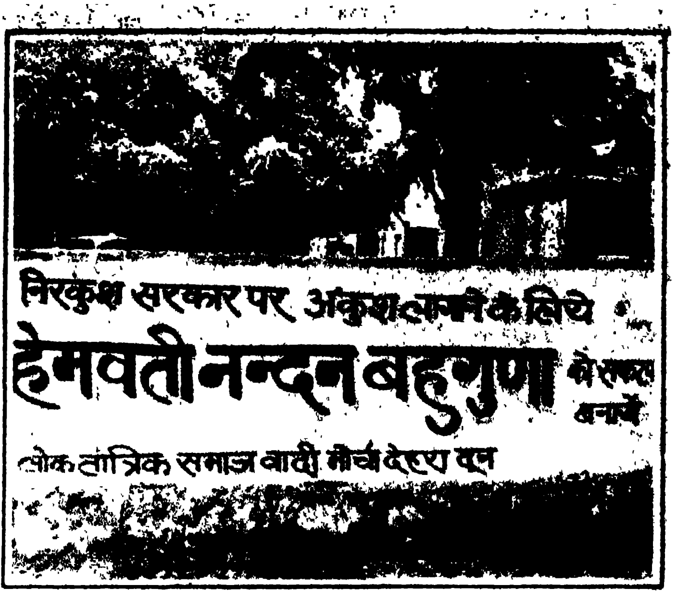
Bahuguna's village

Bughani is a small hamlet, comprising 35 houses and a total population of 150. It does not figure in any local map available in Garhwal. And why should it? It is just one of the many villages which dot the Himalayas in that region. You have to travel 17 kms through a dust track, which has signs of frequent landslides, from Srinagar (on the banks of the Alaknanda) to reach Bughani. This is the village where Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna was born and the 17 kms of dust track was the road on which he used to travel every day, on ponyback, to attend school at Srinagar. When our car stopped near the village, curious villagers approached us. We asked if this was Mr Bahuguna's village. "Yes, from which party have you come?" we were asked. We explained that we were journalists. We were told to meet the village *Pradhan*. Mr Dhruv Chand Bahuguna (45), sat in his *pansari* (general merchandise) shop. He okayed our visit to the residence of Mr H. N. Bahuguna, but restrained us from taking photographs.

Mr Bahuguna's house is the biggest in the village. He has kept the first floor to himself and given portions of the ground floor to a post office and to an alopathic hospital. Enquiries revealed that he does not charge any rent for these two public facilities. In fact, he even pays the electricity bills for the post office and the hospital. The post office has a telephone (the only one in the village) connected to the exchange at Srinagar.

Adjacent to Mr Bahuguna's house is the harijan *tola* (locality). Despite being brahmins and the local *kanungo*, the Bahugunas have lived next to the harijan *tola* for centuries. The main problem of the village is water. Ironically, the Garhwal region, which is the source of the Ganga and the Yamuna—which provide water to the entire Indo-Gangetic plains—suffers from acute water scarcity. There is a water pipe which brings water to the village from the nearest block headquarters at Khirsu. The other source of water is two kms away, a stream, from where the villagers fetch water. There was a *bauri* (water reservoir) within a furlong of the village, but it was covered by a landslide a few years ago and the PWD has done little to reopen the *bauri*. "This village has to suffer because it is the village of Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna," said Vijay Bahuguna (not his son), a 21-year-old student who studies in a college at Srinagar (he had contested the last college elections). Asked to elaborate, he said, "When we go to the authorities, they say you are trying to throw your weight about because you come from Bahuguna's village. We cannot let him get such an image, so we quietly walk away. After all, it is our pride that he belongs here and often comes here."

H. N. Bahuguna on his campaigns


निरंकुश सरकार पर अंकुश लगाने के लिये
हेमवती नन्दन बहुगुणा को सफल बनायें
लोकतांत्रिक समाजवादी मोर्चा देहरा दून

Election poster of Mr Bahuguna

increases the sugar quota, imagine what will happen when I win," he says amidst laughter. About Mrs Gandhi's 34 meetings Mr Bahuguna says that when he contested the 1980 Lok Sabha polls, Mrs Gandhi never came to Garhwal. On the contrary it was he who went to Rae Bareilli and Amethi to campaign for her and Sanjay Gandhi. The very fact that Mrs Gandhi was coming to campaign against him showed that his defeat was important for her. He tells the electorate that if they cared for the *izzat* (honour) of Garhwal, they should not encourage Mrs Gandhi.

Garhwal is a predominantly thakur-dominated constituency. Nearly 70 per cent of the voters are thakurs. Mr Chander Mohan Singh Negi is a thakur. Brahmins, the community to which Mr Bahuguna and Mr Shivanand Nautiyal belong, constitute only eight per cent of the voters.

The rest are harijans. There are hardly 12,000 Muslim voters. Caste has never before been a major factor in elections in this area. But this time, unfortunately, the seeds of casteist feelings are being sown in Garhwal. While the Congress(I) accuse Mr Bahuguna of being a casteist, facts show otherwise. To begin with, casteism cannot benefit Mr Bahuguna. In the last Assembly elections, three of the four independents fielded by Mr Bahuguna were thakurs and only one was a brahmin. Most election agents appointed by the Bahuguna camp are thakurs. The Congress(I) is blatantly asking for votes on casteist lines. One of the allegations being made by Mr Bahuguna's supporters is that even in the 1980 Lok Sabha poll Mr Chander Mohan Singh Negi, as a Congress(I) man, had not worked for Mr Bahuguna but had instead helped the Janata candidate, Mr Pushpwan, because he is a thakur. Whether this is true or not is difficult to ascertain, but the fact is that in this election the local BJP units led by Mr Pushpwan are certainly supporting Mr Negi, and not Mr Bahuguna, who is supposed to be the opposition's consensus candidate.

The BJP is actively supporting the Congress(I) candidate in Garhwal, and not Mr Bahuguna.

Mr Bahuguna also fears that the elections will be rigged. He told SUNDAY that he had written a number of letters to the chief election commissioner making charges against the local administration. For one thing, the district magistrate of Garhwal, Mr Alok Singh was replaced on 1 May after the election notification was issued by Mr Govind Ballabh Pandey, an officer from Lucknow. Mr Pandey was posted because he belongs to the hills, to the neighbouring district. Besides, Mr Pandey is a nephew of the union planning and labour minister, Mr Narayan Dutt Tiwari. Mr Bahuguna's men allege that in all 1,700 officers have been transferred out by the state government from Garhwal district since Mr Bahuguna resigned his Lok Sabha seat last year. Mr Bahuguna has asked the returning officer to furnish the list of the election personnel in each booth to him before the poll. He has also asked for the registration numbers of the buses which will bring the ballot boxes to the counting centres as well as the proposed routes. His partymen are being issued instructions detailing how to prevent rigging—a cyclostyled sheet is being circulated to each of Mr Bahuguna's men.

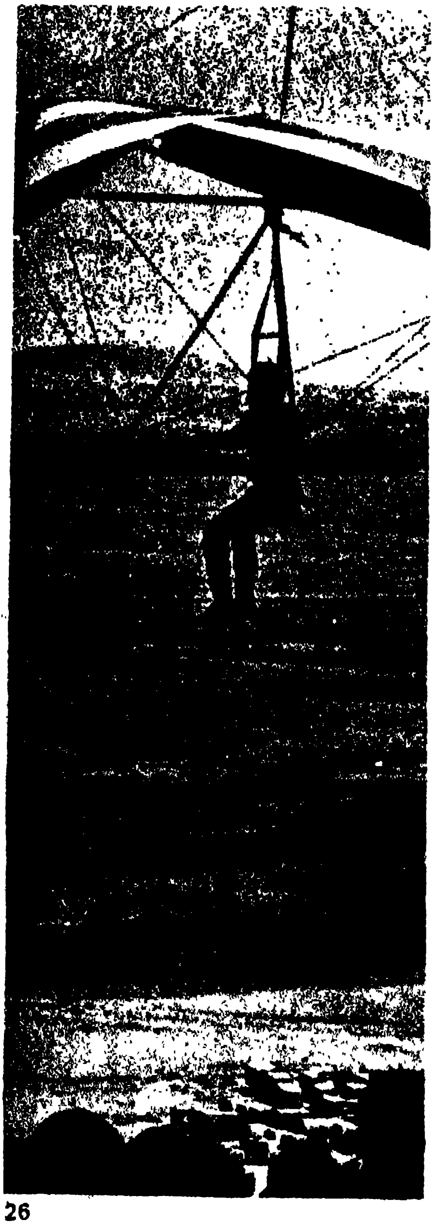
The state government is at present busy disbursing Rs 28 lakhs from the chief minister's relief fund in Garhwal following a storm in the area which caused extensive damage. Mr Bahuguna's men allege that this amount is being disbursed at the discretion of the local Congress(I) bosses. One thing is clear: The Congress(I) is taking the election very seriously. Mr Ram Lal, the chief minister of Himachal Pradesh (which adjoins the Garhwal hills) who is a thakur, has been made in charge of the Congress(I) campaign. It may be recalled that the same Mr Ram Lal was in charge of the campaigning at Rae Bareilli when Mrs Gandhi contested that seat in January 1980. As a result, he is considered to be one of the best election managers in Mrs Gandhi's party. Again, because there is a sizeable Punjabi vote in the Dehradun segment, central minister Mr Buta Singh has been deputed there. And so has been the MP from Patiala, Mr Aminder Singh, who is the present "raja" of Patiala. Two local ministers in the UP cabinet, Brahm Dutt and Gulab Singh have also been sent to the constituency, as has Mr Baldev Singh Arya, the chairman of the UP harijan welfare board. The Indian Youth Congress (I) general secretary Mr Vinod Sharma has been sent with 500 young men from Punjab and Haryana to Karnaprayag. The Delhi Youth Congress(I) chief, Mr Jagdish Tytler, has been deputed with an equal number to Pauri. In fact, Mr Tytler was sent to Pauri because the local Youth Congress(I) was reluctant to work for Mr Negi because of his Congress(O) past. Mr Tytler became familiar with the local Congress(I) when he used to accompany Mr Sanjay Gandhi during the court cases at Dehradun.

The rains are expected early in the hills this year, and this could mar Mr Bahuguna's chances, as the bulk of his support is in the hills. In the terai region, in the Dehradun and Landsdowne Assembly segments, the support is more or less shared, the tilt, if any, being in favour of the Congress(I). If the rains come, and the voting is poor in the hills, it will become much harder for Mr Bahuguna to get his supporters to reach the voting booths. Given fair weather, Mr Bahuguna may be able to become the first man in the Indian Parliament to win back a seat he had resigned. ■

Photographs by Kamal Sahai

SUNDAY SPECIAL

Flying Man



Hang gliders take off Photographs by Dilip Chakravorty

Five Indians created history of sorts on 24 May. They ushered in a new era in the novel sport of hang gliding. While nearly 3,000 spectators stood wide-eyed in wonder, the five pioneers, Major Vivek Mundkur, Captains Kenjalkar, Shah and Gurung and Sapper Sireesh Ram, flew off a 200-metre high ridge, 12 kms from Pune city. They had planned to fly for a reasonable period of time but their greatest ally in this adventure, the wind, ditched them. The winds, the main booster for hang gliding promised to be ideal at 22 mph but when the appointed hour came for the flying men to take off, the wind dropped to a dangerously low 14 mph. The five men could barely stay in the air for five minutes. Even so it was a magnificent sight. The "birds" were dressed in black jeans and sweat shirts emblazoned with the legend "Sappers can also fly". They were seen "winging" their way down to earth from a height of 200 metres. The "wings" with a 30-foot span were made of hope—plastic sails. The outer frame is made of tubular aluminium rods.

The brain behind this novel "hang gliding" demonstration was Major Mundkur of the college of military engineering, Pune. His America-returned cousin, it is said, was a hang gliding enthusiast and after a holiday in India in 1976 left his do-it-yourself kit with Mundkur. Thereafter Mundkur who was bitten by the flying bug made himself a hang glider. His colleagues too were interested in helping him and as soon as he finished making one he made cautious attempts to fly and did manage to get to a height of 20 feet above ground. For nearly two years from 1976 he was a lone flier, until his senior Lieutenant General S.N. Sharma, engineer-in-chief, army headquarters, had Mundkur sent to study the finer points of hang gliding. under Mike Adam at the private hang gliding club in south Wales.

On his return from the two-month training course, Mundkur set up the Corps of Engineering" Hang Gliding Club and imported three gliders at a cost of Rs 50,000. They have since made four indigenous gliders and 25 are under construction at present. Hang gliding enthusiasts who want to take this up as a sport may do so because it is said that gliders will soon be put on the market at Rs 5,000.

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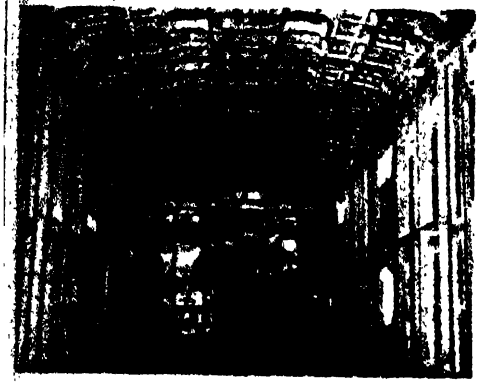
SUNDAY SPECIAL

CALCUTTA METRO RAIL

No light at the end of the tunnel

BY URMIMALA LAHIRI



Inside an undergound railway coach

Work in progress on one of the streets

TAPAN DAS

"Calcutta's underground railway project was sanctioned in 1973, and if everything had gone according to plan, it would have been commissioned this year," wrote Mr V. C. A. Padmanabhan, member engineering, Railway Board in May 1979. Today, more than two years later, in May 1981, the country's first underground railway is nowhere near completion. Out of total route length of 16.43 kms (Dum Dum to Tollyganj), a length of 1.5 kms of track has been completed over which a trial run is expected in three months. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Railway Project (MRP) authorities have been telling Calcuttans that there is no cause for worry. The work is to be completed in two phases: the first phase that covers the distances from Dum Dum to Shyambazar and Tollyganj to Esplanade is expected to be finished within 1984-85 and the second phase will see the completion of the track from Shyambazar to Esplanade in 1986-87.

On almost every sector of work, construction is progressing slowly mainly because of differences between the Metro authorities and the contractors entrusted with the work In fact, so slow is the progress that a former general manager of the underground railway said that the project would not be completed before 1990. In the face of such a prophecy from one who knows the situation, the metro railway engineers have been reassuring Calcuttans that the Esplanade-Tollyganj section would be completed by 1984-85. What then is holding up the progress of work?

The metro authorities can, with some justification, point their fingers at the allocation of funds, which are made available to them in relatively small doses. From the 1974 estimate of Rs 250 crores the total project cost estimate has recently been revised to Rs 500 crores—a 100% rise. The budget demand for 1981-82 is Rs 35.6 crores against Rs 27 crores allocated for 1980-81. The annual allocation in the earlier years had been even smaller.

The project's general manager, Mr P. V. Narayanaswamy's position, viewed in this light, is unenviable.

With virtually nothing tangible or visible to show to the public, he has dished out information that trial runs of the highly-sophisticated fully-automated passenger coaches are due to start soon. The only fact Calcuttans know with certainty is that since the commencement of construction, underground tunnelling has progressed only about 20 metres till today. Mr Narayanaswamy was, however, justified in mentioning to the press that the end of this 20-metre long tunnel was in sight!

Credit, nevertheless, must be given where it is due. Although it strains the imagination to think how the nearly 17

One of the unfinished stations

kms-long railway track will be completed at all when most of the 17 stations are yet to be built. It is worthwhile to look at what is being currently done. A change in the original blueprint, announced by the general manager, has been the adoption of an unique tunnelling method for a 300-metre stretch from the east of the Chitpur yard to Belgatchia. The MRP authorities have decided not to undertake the job themselves but to give it to contractors. The tunnelling is being done with the technical help of Russian and Hungarian experts. A tunnelling shield has been lowered into position and will now make its way through an underground stretch of 780 metres upto Shyambazar five-point crossing. This is a highly technical job which requires operation at 55 feet below the surface. The tunnelling is being done with the aid of compressed air, the pressure of which is twice that of the air outside. Workers had to be trained to acclimatise themselves and to protect themselves against carbon monoxide and methane. The compressed air technology used for extracting moisture from the soil has the advantage of diluting the content of these gases.

Apart from this short stretch, from Shyambazar to Tollyganj, there will be practically no tunnelling. The method used will be the cut-and-cover one. This is less expensive than tunnelling but it has the disadvantage of being more disruptive. Nevertheless, it is the tunnelling operations that are the most difficult. The completion of the one-kilometre long track, Belgatchia to Shyambazar passing under numerous railway lines and a water channel will indeed be a major achievement.

This, admittedly, is the incomplete story of Calcutta's underground railway. There is little to talk about at the moment. It is pointless to mention the proposed second phase of the underground system that will connect Sealdah and Howrah, the two points where commuters from suburbs come in to work in Calcutta. This stretch of track will intersect the Dum Dum—Tollyganj track, although at a lower level. Nor is it worthwhile to mention that the underground system will lose much of its utility without connections to the southern suburbs of Calcutta: Garia, Sonarpur and Baruipur.

Meanwhile, digging operations continue and Calcuttans are fed up with disruptions in the already overburdened traffic system of the tenth most populous city of the world. Most cities as large as Calcutta or even smaller have roads constituting between 15% and 20% of the city area, Calcutta's roads account for no more than 6% to 8% of the city's area. It is not without reason that over the years, Calcutta's traffic problems have increased with the number of vehicles and people. Calcutta is already an overbuilt city and hardly any expansion or addition to surface roads can be contemplated. The only alternative, therefore, is the underground railway. And it has its advantages. Nearly 70,000 people can move from one place to another in an hour compared with the nearly 1,500 people who normally move in one hour in private automobiles or about 4,500 people who can move in buses. Calcutta should have got its underground system much earlier. London had its underground railway as far back as 1863, New York had it in 1867, Budapest in 1896, Paris in 1900, Berlin in 1902, Hamburg in 1912, Madrid in 1919, Tokyo in 1927, Osaka and Stockholm in 1933, Moscow in 1935, Montreal in 1949, Rome in 1955 and Rotterdam in 1965. Most of the cities has never been really as crowded as Calcutta.

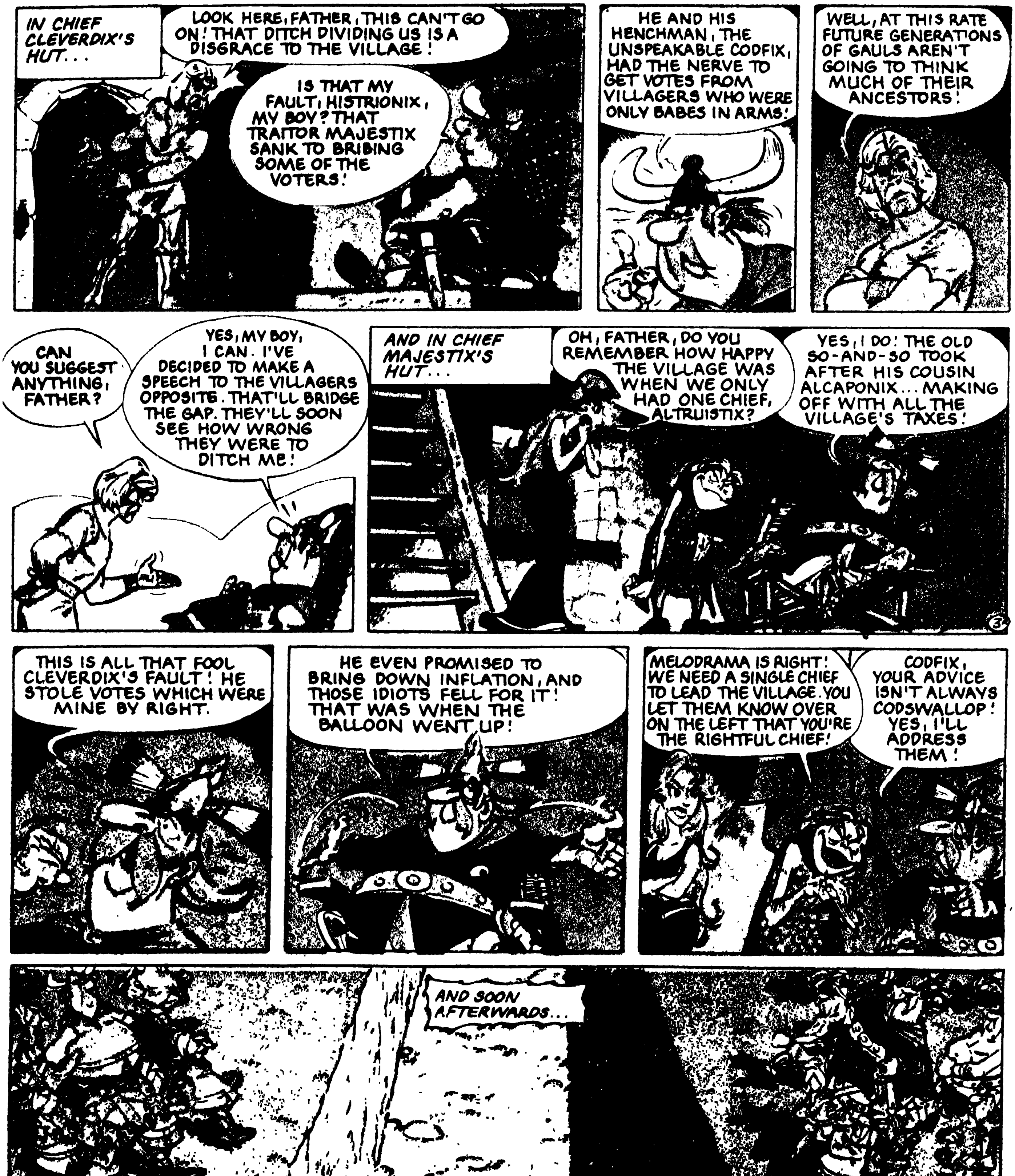
The state government has taken a serious view of the situation: it is worried about cracks that have appeared in a number of houses in south Calcutta. The West Bengal minister for municipal affairs, Mr Prasanta Sur, recently visited houses on Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Road where tunnelling operations are being carried on. Portions of roads have also caved in with the onset of rains. The city architect of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation mentioned in a recent interview that the responsibility for the damaged houses was the MRP's. He also cautioned the authorities that care should be taken in future construction work. But words will not do Prompt action is required.

ALOKE MITRA

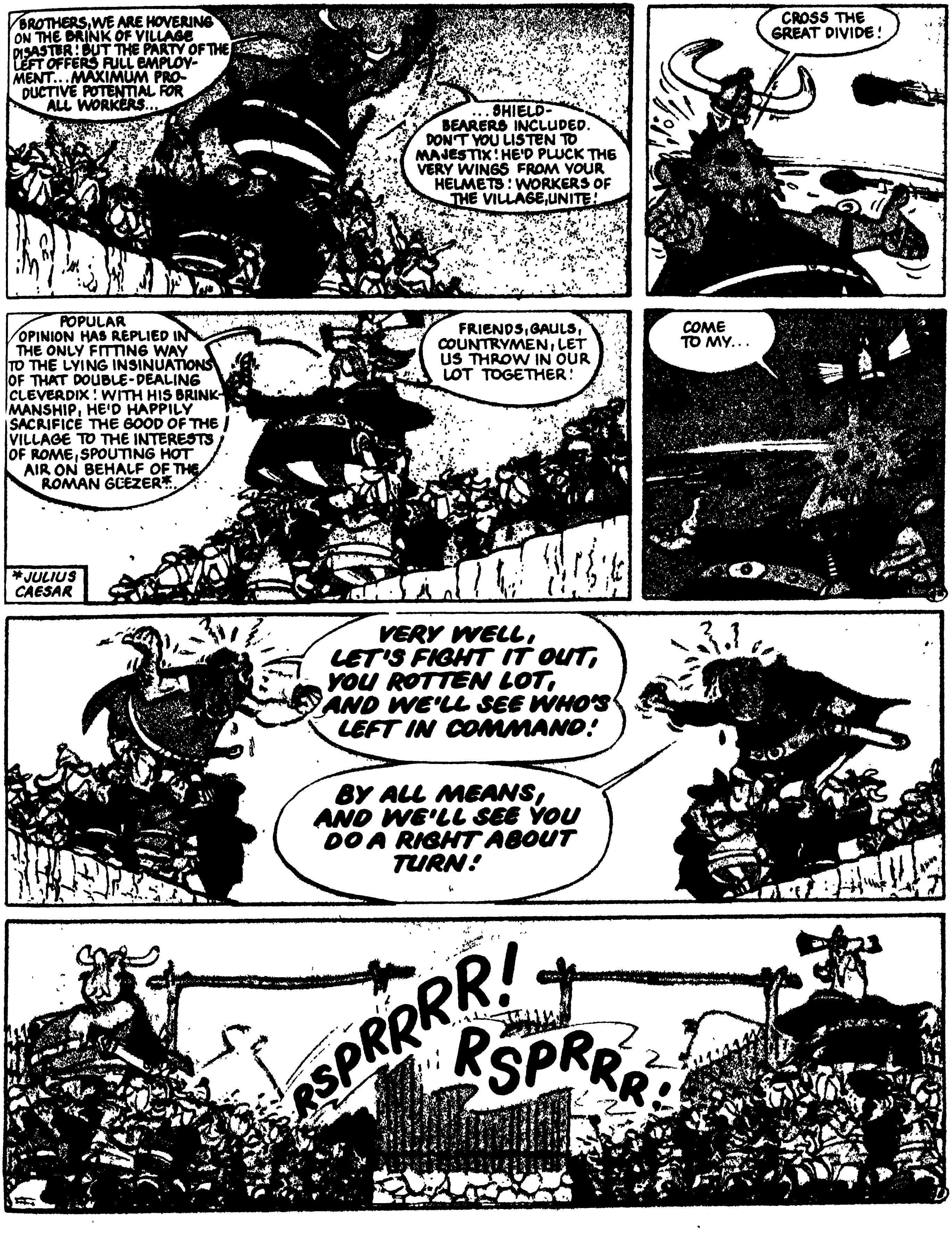
Metro railway project in progress

ASTERIX AND THE GREAT DIVIDE

written and illustrated by UDERZO


IN CHIEF CLEVERDIX'S HUT...
LOOK HERE, FATHER, THIS CAN'T GO ON! THAT DITCH DIVIDING US IS A DISGRACE TO THE VILLAGE!
IS THAT MY FAULT, HISTRIONIX, MY BOY? THAT TRAITOR MAJESTIX SANK TO BRIBING SOME OF THE VOTERS!
HE AND HIS HENCHMAN, THE UNSPEAKABLE CODFIX, HAD THE NERVE TO GET VOTES FROM VILLAGERS WHO WERE ONLY BABES IN ARMS!
WELL, AT THIS RATE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF GAULS AREN'T GOING TO THINK MUCH OF THEIR ANCESTORS!
CAN YOU SUGGEST ANYTHING, FATHER?
YES, MY BOY, I CAN. I'VE DECIDED TO MAKE A SPEECH TO THE VILLAGERS OPPOSITE. THAT'LL BRIDGE THE GAP. THEY'LL SOON SEE HOW WRONG THEY WERE TO DITCH ME!
AND IN CHIEF MAJESTIX'S HUT...
OH, FATHER, DO YOU REMEMBER HOW HAPPY THE VILLAGE WAS WHEN WE ONLY HAD ONE CHIEF, ALTRUISTIX?
YES, I DO! THE OLD SO-AND-SO TOOK AFTER HIS COUSIN ALCAPONIX... MAKING OFF WITH ALL THE VILLAGE'S TAXES!
THIS IS ALL THAT FOOL CLEVERDIX'S FAULT! HE STOLE VOTES WHICH WERE MINE BY RIGHT.
HE EVEN PROMISED TO BRING DOWN INFLATION, AND THOSE IDIOTS FELL FOR IT! THAT WAS WHEN THE BALLOON WENT UP!
MELODRAMA IS RIGHT! WE NEED A SINGLE CHIEF TO LEAD THE VILLAGE. YOU LET THEM KNOW OVER ON THE LEFT THAT YOU'RE THE RIGHTFUL CHIEF!
CODFIX, YOUR ADVICE ISN'T ALWAYS CODSWALLOP! YES, I'LL ADDRESS THEM!
AND SOON AFTERWARDS...

[redacted]


BROTHERS, WE ARE HOVERING ON THE BRINK OF VILLAGE DISASTER! BUT THE PARTY OF THE LEFT OFFERS FULL EMPLOYMENT... MAXIMUM PRODUCTIVE POTENTIAL FOR ALL WORKERS...
...SHIELD-BEARERS INCLUDED. DON'T YOU LISTEN TO MAJESTIX! HE'D PLUCK THE VERY WINGS FROM YOUR HELMETS: WORKERS OF THE VILLAGE, UNITE!
CROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE!
POPULAR OPINION HAS REPLIED IN THE ONLY FITTING WAY TO THE LYING INSINUATIONS OF THAT DOUBLE-DEALING CLEVERDIX! WITH HIS BRINKMANSHIP, HE'D HAPPILY SACRIFICE THE GOOD OF THE VILLAGE TO THE INTERESTS OF ROME, SPOUTING HOT AIR ON BEHALF OF THE ROMAN GEEZER*...
FRIENDS, GAULS, COUNTRYMEN, LET US THROW IN OUR LOT TOGETHER!
*JULIUS CAESAR
COME TO MY...
VERY WELL, LET'S FIGHT IT OUT, YOU ROTTEN LOT, AND WE'LL SEE WHO'S LEFT IN COMMAND!
BY ALL MEANS, AND WE'LL SEE YOU DO A RIGHT ABOUT TURN!
RSPRRRR!
RSPRRRR!

Birla Mandir priests go on a strike

Will the pujaris *next form a union?*

New **Delhi:** The red flag has risen from the imposing house of god—the Lakshmi Narayan temple popularly known as the Birla Mandir in Delhi. Its *karamcharis* (workers) and *pujaris* (priests) are on strike—a week of *dharna* intensified to an indefinite hunger strike. They are demanding minimum wages (Goddess Lakshmi has obviously not filled their coffers) provident fund, reinstatement of dismissed employees and dismissal of the temple manager, Mr M. L. Ojha. They also say that the management is corrupt.

One can almost hear echoes of the militant *"Tanashahi nahi chalegi, nahi chalegi* (dictatorship cannot go on)" as Pandit Mast Ram Sastri, a *pujari* on strike, expounds the same opinion in softer tones. He talks of democracy and fundamental rights in *shudh* (perfect) Hindi, looking a trifle incongruous sitting cross-legged in a pandal constructed outside the temple. His rightful place, however, is inside drawing up *"Janampatris"* (horoscopes) for believers.

A section of the employees fed up with the employers, (the managers of the Lakshmi Narayan Temple Trust) formed an union last year. It was recognised by the registrar of trade unions in August 1980, giving credence to their plea that the temple can be defined as an industry under the Trade Union Act. Perhaps, the employees are right in their observance although as the secretary of the trust, Mr M. L. Anand, said officiously, "In our preamble there is no provision for a trade union."

The Birla Mandir, according to its controversial manager, Mr Ojha, who took over after retiring as executive officer from the Pilani Municipal Board, has a minimum annual turnover of Rs 4.5 lakhs through donations. The rules for employees exist on paper but are exercised according to will. Both Mr Ojha and Mr Anand spoke of provident fund, free medical aid, accommodation, livery for the *karamcharis,* a minimum wage of Rs 240 per month, bonus and retirement at 58 years. The employees said that provident fund was meant only for a few. Mr Ojha, however, admitted that provident fund was, under consideration for newly-recruited employees. Who were they? He said he was referring to employees appointed four years ago whose cases were under consideration since the last three or four months. Does it usually take so long? "You must remember this is not a trade, but god's temple," he replied. But, asserted Pandit Mast Ram Shastri, "We did not want to think of this as an industry. We were compelled to—by the management and their attitude."

The retirement age also applies to the *pujaris.* Of course, subject to the trustees' wish. Pandit Mata Prasad was retired over two years ago by the management. But, the employees point out, the present head priest was appointed although he was over 60 years of age.

The agitation began on 17 May. About 50 of the temple's 95 employees are on strike. Caste differences were forgotten as the *pujari* pandits joined hands with the sweepers and the *chowkidars* (watchmen) for their demands. Money did what the gods had failed to—as the great equaliser, it brought the man with a *tilak* (caste mark) on his forehead closer to the man with a broom. Of the 11 *pujaris,* four are on strike. They are: Pandit Mast Shastri, Pandit Bhale Ram, Pandit Jai Bhagwan and Pandit Brij Lal. Pandit Shastri, a school teacher at Muzzafarnagar before joining the temple, said he had switched professions because the *pujari's* profession was more lucrative. He had been getting Rs 275 per month as a teacher. Now he gets Rs 232 but "here I make an extra Rs 800 from astrology." Then how does the demand for minimum wages apply to you, I asked. The Pandit smiled gently, "God has said that one who tolerates injustice is a greater sinner than the one who commits injustice." The implication was clear: this *pujari's* fight was against injustice and not for personal gains. Pandit Bhale Ram was a "private" *pujari* before joining Birla Mandir. "But here the management is creating groupism," he said sadly. He is seriously thinking of going back to his private profession.

It all began with Rs 120. Looking at it in another way, the amount was perhaps the last straw. A few weeks ago all employees who were not members of the Sri Sanatan Dharam Sabha Lakshmi Narayan Temple Trust Karamchari Sangh were rewarded for their loyalty. An extra Rs 120 was given to each. The money, the union members claimed, was paid by the Arya Dharam Sewa Sangh in Gol Market at the instance of Mr Ojha. But Mr Ojha himself said that Rs 120 had been paid to all employees who had asked for it. Who had they requested? The government employee turned temple manager was evasive. Finally he muttered, "Birlaji."

Mr Anand insisted he was not aware of the employees' grievances, if any. At the same time he added that most of their demands were being met by the management. The employees, on the other hand, said they had an

The dharna *of the Birla Mandir employees*

SANDEEP SHANKAR

inconclusive round of talks with the trustees, a fact confirmed by Mr Ojha. Meanwhile, the *pujaris* and *karamcharis* have demanded appointment letters: "It is a trust. There should be rules," they maintain.

The strike, like so many agitations today, has its own share of political intruders. A gentleman who insisted on speaking for the agitating workers refused to identify himself. "I am just a religious man," he said sheepishly and a little later I saw him quietly slip out of the pandal. He was replaced by Mr D. C. Virat who proudly claimed to be president of a *rajdhani* youth forum "affiliated to the Youth Congress(I)." This temple's union, Mr Virat was determined, would soon seek affiliation with the INTUC. The president of the Karamchari Sangh, head *jamadar* (sweeper) Ganpat, who had sat quietly all through interrupted to say, "Yes we hope to receive nationwide support."

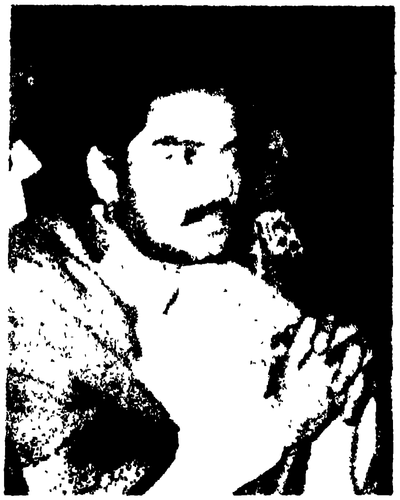
An interesting thought. If a trade union can triumph over the gods, cut through rigid caste differences it may even demolish religious barriers and bring the Mullahs, Pandits and Padres together on a common platfrom—in the fight for a better livelihood.

Shehnaz Syed

Pahadia's search to oust N. S. Bhatti

Jaipur: Chief minister Jagannath Pahadia is now directing his forces against state deputy minister Mr Narendra Singh Bhatti once again. The CM is trying rather desperately to implicate Mr Bhatti in a murder case. This in spite of the fact that the police had caught suspects in the murder of Mr Hukam Singh, alias Tutu Bana, son of the late Maharajah of Jodhpur who was murdered in Jodhpur on 18 April 1981. Tutu had a police record and had been granted bail for "treatment of mental illness."His other qualification was that he was a Youth Congress(I) activist. Four alleged murderers were arrested within 24 hours after the murder, but the CM is now making efforts to implicate Mr Bhatti. The case has been handed over to the CID and an officer who is strongly suspected to be anti-Bhatti was given charge of the investigation. Already a month has elapsed, and nothing has come out of the investigation yet.

Tutu Bana



It may be recalled that this is not the first time that the CM has expressed his wrath against the deputy minister. When Mr Bhatti sued Maneka Gandhi for publishing some derogatory remarks in *Surya*, the CM pressed the Prime Minister to dismiss Mr Bhatti from the party. Mrs Indira Gandhi however, refused to comply (SUNDAY 11 January 1981). But the CM was reluctant to forget the case. He asked the law department to file an appeal against the verdict of the lower court that had absolved Mr Bhatti of a charge of murder of Padam Singh which took place in his father's farm. This was the same case that *Surya* had referred to, and for which Mr Bhatti had sued the editor. Later the CM had extended a hand of friendship towards Mr Bhatti, but the friendship was shortlived. Mr Pahadia's activities against the detractors of his party do not come as a surprise, for they are only a part of the massive drive that the CM has decided to undertake in order to come down on the dissidents with a heavy hand.

Milap Chand Dandia

NAXALITES

'Come together'—for another offensive?

Trivandrum: The arch-priest of Naxalites', Mr Kanu Sanyal, visited Kerala in the middle of May with the sole intention of bringing unity among the numerous warring Naxalite groups. Perhaps, he also advised them on the path of extremism they could choose. As if in answer, one of the groups in north Kerala hacked to death Mr Mathai on 20 May, whom they had earlier sentenced to death in their "peoples' court".

But Mr Sanyal has given up the policy of "execution of class enemies" apparently because he has understood that a revolution through chopping heads would lead them nowhere. He is also against the idea of holding "peoples' courts". Although he tried his best he has not been able to convince most of the splinter groups who still cling to the belief that power can be gained by chopping off heads of class enemies. One such group is led by Mr Venu, who in spite of being chased by policemen addressed a public meeting. It was the inefficiency of the police that resulted in the murder of Mr Mathai. Mr Mathai had often complained to the police about the threatening letters he received. After the peoples' court's judgement, some policemen were posted in his house on the edge of the forest in Kenichira, Wynad district. On 20 May more than 50 armed Naxalites surrounded Mathai's house and burst bombs to distract the police. Some of them then went into the bedroom in which Mr Mathai had hidden and butchered him to death. The policemen, meanwhile, started firing into the dark but the attackers escaped.

The meticulously planned annihilation plot was executed with precision and proved the capabilities of the group. The next day posters appeared all over Wynad and spoke of the martyrdom of one of the Naxalites, P. K. Rajan, who had been killed by the police. Some posters congratulating the annihilators of the class enemies also appeared in Trivandrum.

Nevertheless, Mr Sanyal's visit had its rewards. He succeeded in bringing together two groups: the Organisation of the Committee of Communist Revolutionaries and the Bolshevik Communist Party. A communique signed by Mr Sanyal, Jose Abraham and Gouridasan Nair said they would continue their ideological fights against revisionism, opportunism and left adventurism. There would be an end to individual terrorism and anarchism which were contrary to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. Meanwhile, the Left Democratic Front home minister, Mr T. K. Ramakrishnan, reiterated that there was no question of outlawing the extremists. Instead they would be tackled politically.

Binoo K. John

KARNATAKA

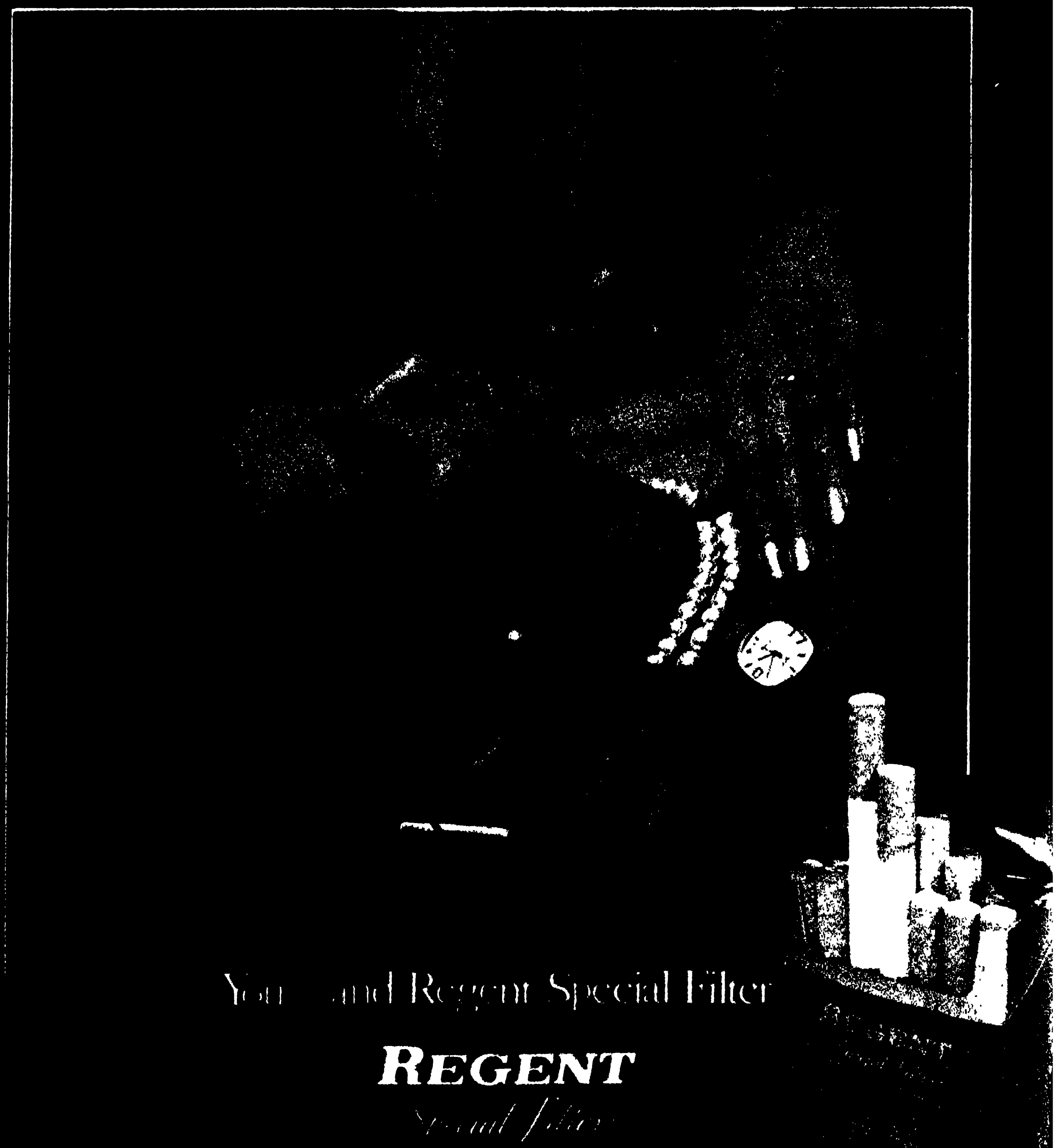
Another scandal shakes the cabinet

Bangalore: On 22 May, Mrs Renuka Rajendran, the minister for sericulture and small scale industries, resigned voluntarily from the 17-month old Congress(I) government. Mrs Rajendran was the first harijan minister to be sworn into the Gundu Rao cabinet and she was also the first cabinet minister to be charge-sheeted in a court.

Mrs Rajendran was charge-sheeted by the corps of detectives in the chief metropolitan magistrate's court on 18 May for allegedly cheating an unemployed youth of Rs 25,000 to influence a public servant. The prosecution has filed charges under Section 420 (cheating), Section 162 (taking bribe to influence a public servant) and Section 163 (taking bribe to exercise personal influence with a public servant) of the IPC. The first charge carries a punishment of seven years' imprisonment or fine or both, the second, imprisonment for three years, with or without fine and the third, one years' imprisonment with or without fine.

It began in August 1979. Mrs Rajen-

An Exclusive Affair



You... and Regent Special Filter

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dran, at that time a ruling party legislator from the reserved constituency of Kolar district, was approached by Suresh, a lad from Nagarkodige village in Hossanagar *taluk* in Shimoga district, for the job of a sub-inspector. Suresh had taken the written examinations and sought the influence to guarantee himself the job. Suresh, who had taken upon himself to expose Mrs Rajendran, alleged that the minister took Rs 25,000 from him. However, when Suresh's name did not appear on the final list, he went to take back the money. Mr K. Rajendran, the joint director of information and publicity and his wife Mrs Renuka Rajendran signed several cheques, most of which bounced. Unable to recover more than Rs 4,000 after two years, Suresh approached Mr A. K. Subbaiah the leader of the opposition in the legislative council. Mr Subbaiah raised the issue in the council and Mr Devaraj Urs, the then chief minister, promised to investigate.

A case was registered against the couple on 9 September 1979, the same month the Congress(I) split. Mrs Rajendran was among the first legislators to switch to the Congress(I), then in the opposition. During the next couple of years, Mrs Rajendran's career in politics took an upward turn. Till December 1980, she was a minister of state for sericulture following which she was induced into the Gundu Rao cabinet, holding additional charge of small scale industries. Preference shown to Mrs Rajendran over Mrs Manorama Madhawaraj, the then minister of state for women and child welfare created quite a stir. Moreover, when the land tribunal files that were to be handled by the then revenue minister Mr S. Bangarappa were sent to Mrs Rajendran for scrutiny, talks of favouritism by the chief minister circulated. That the minister is a favourite of Mr Gundu Rao became obvious when, on several occasions, the minister was found taking Mr Rao's place at public functions.

Under these circumstances, Mr Rao's reactions to the charge-sheet and the subsequent resignation of the minister have been surprising. Mrs Rajendran returned from Kashmir two days after the charge-sheet had been filed and drove straight from the airport to the chief minister's office in the Vidhan Soudha. The minister tendered her resignation which was forwarded to the Governor's office immediately. The Governor accepted the resignation. "The very fact that the charge-sheet has been filed proves that it has the concurrence of the government," said Mr Rao on hearing about the charges made against three other cabinet members: Mr C. M. Ibrahim, Mr H. C. Srikataiah and Mr K. Yenkatappa.

Mrs Rajendran is scheduled to appear before the court of the additional chief metropolitan magistrate, Mr S. R. Venkatesha Murthy on 21 June. A charge-sheet against her husband is also expected.

Louise Fernandes

Casteist politics in a Goa church

Panaji: Angry villagers of Cuncolim, near Goa's border with Karnataka, have a new name for their church—the Church of Our Lady of Health—the Independent Church of Cuncolim. They had to change the name because of a bitter caste struggle among the parishoners. Earlier, the archbishop of Goa, Monsignor Raul Gonsalves, had closed the church after having tried unsuccessfully to weed out casteism from the local "Confraria"—a church organisation constitutionally restricted to the original Kshatriyas of the village.

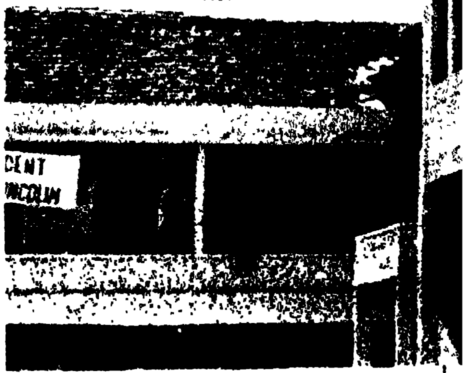
The villagers took over the church during Holy Week having earlier relieved the parish priest of the keys of the church. Those who have taken over the church have a few but vocal sympathisers in the nearby villages of Assolna and Velim, which like Cuncolim were the last Goan settlements to be converted to Catholicism. And their resistance to conversion has a bloody and violent precedent. It is said that the villagers of Cuncolim killed Fr Rudolph Aquaviva, the Jesuit priest who converted the villagers during Emperor Akbar's reign.

Perhaps, the Cuncolim villagers feel they have a tradition to maintain. The original Kshatriya settlers, after having reconciled themselves to conversion, have divided the whole village into 12 *vangodds* (family fiefdoms) with such absolute rights as the rights of patronage and financing of the village's 12 main Catholic religious festivals. And the conservative among the Catholic Kshatriyas want their "rights" to be respected irrespective of whatever Christ may have preached about love among brethren and equality.

Cuncolim, incidentally, is the only village where public property has been taken over by a villagers' committee which distributes plots of communal land on eleven months' lease for the construction of houses. No one challenges the committee for none can afford to fall out with the powerful committee members.

Mario Cabral e Sa

The church in Cuncolim



SUNIL NAIK

ALL INDIA RADIO

The headless organisation

New Delhi: The union government has done it again. Mr U. L. Baruah, the director-general, All India Radio retired on 30 April and till we went to press four weeks later, the name of the new incumbent to one of the most sensitive posts of the government of India had not been announced. When Mr Baruah, the then seniormost deputy director-general, was appointed DG in September 1979, it was after six long months of governmental indecision. During that period the information and broadcasting secretary had officiated as the DG, AIR.

The present situation is of a piece with the past. Contrary to the custom of announcing the new incumbent's name a month before the serving DG's term ends, the government begins the exercise of choosing the new incumbent *after* the post is free. This, in itself, considering the sensitivity of the position, is preposterous. Thereafter, begins a hackneyed debate: whether the government should appoint a 'generalist' (an IAS officer) or a 'specialist' (a professional programme staff man). The engineers of the department too stake a claim to the position though the seniormost post for the engineering staff is that of chief engineer. Very often, yet another dimension is added to the controversy when the I and B minister begins wondering if he should induct a total outsider—a luminary from another medium or one of the performing arts.

The automatic choice for the DG's post this time would have been the seniormost DDG, Mr K. C. Sharma who is due for retirement in July 1982 and does not have a single bad report against him. Instead of promoting him, the government has procrastinated, and, consequently, rumours which are the staple of Delhi's bureaucracy, have abounded. It is said that Mr Shailendra Shankar, DG Doordarshan is angling for the position. It is alleged that Mr Shankar who is junior to Mr Sharma and has several adverse reports in his personal record, managed to become DG TV because of his political connections. If Mr Shankar does become DG AIR, Kamleshwar, the celebrated writer whom the government brought into Doordarshan as additional DG might be made DG TV. The names of two IAS officers are reportedly also being considered by the government for the DG AIR's post. These are Mr L. K. Malhotra of the MP cadre and Mr Harish Khanna whose claim to fame is that he has been on deputation to Mauritius on a couple of occasions. Both of them had, initially in their careers, worked with AIR as programme assistants. But, says AIR's programme staff personnel, the very fact that they had left AIR a long time ago, disqualifies them from making a comeback by filling the department's number one position.

On two occasions in the past, civil servants have been DG AIR. J. C. Mathur, ICS had been DG during 1955-61. In 1972, when Mr A. K. Sen retired as DG, the then I and B minister, Mrs Nandini Satpathy, refused to promote the seniormost DDG Mr P. C. Chatterji who, by all accounts, was an extraordinarily brilliant officer and who, later, did become DG in Mr Sen's place. Mrs Satpathy brought in Mr S. K. Mukherjee, IAS, a bureaucrat whose special subject was geology and who had made a name for himself handling metals and mines! Commenting on the government's propensity to appoint a civil servant to the coveted position, a retired DG who asked to remain anonymous queried, "Why must the IAS hold on to every post in every branch of government?" Said a serving programme staff officer: "If persons with more than 30 years of broadcasting experience are not considered 'ripe for promotion,' where is the logic behind appointing 'generalists' and outsiders for this specialised medium? What is worse is that beside having no experience of the department such a person would only be interested in getting over with his term. He would be a time-server and the department would suffer."

Commenting on the DG's post, said Mr P. C. Chatterji, who had held that post between 1974 and 1979 and is now a senior fellow with ICSSR: "I had suggested to the government that unless promotions come earlier in the junior grades you can't have an officer who will have at least five years to go when he is appointed DG. Nobody can make a job of a department if he gets to head it for less than a reasonable period. In the BBC, Sir Charles Curran was DG for eight years. His predecessor Hugh Greene, brother of the distinguished novelist (Graham Greene), was DG for 13 years. In AIR, apart from Mr J. C. Mathur no DG in the recent past served for more than five years. In the pre-independence days, the DG's position was a tenure post for at least five years. If that is to be possible you have to give promotions earlier on. Now, in AIR, there isn't a selection grade station director who is under 50 years of age. You have to have enterprising young station directors to head the kind of stations that AIR has like Leh, for instance, at 11,000 feet."

What of the engineers' claims to the post? It is untenable. An AIR's programme staffer recalling what a former minister, Mr Inder Gujral ("the only minister who understood the medium") once mentioned: "AIR is not a power house or a hydel project to be handed over to the engineers." This statement endorses the pre-eminence of the message over the medium and yet successive ministers have given a singularly better deal to the engineers. Addressing the engineers' association, Mr Vasant Sathe is recently reported to have said that the DG's post need not go to one discipline only. But why do I and B ministers tend to unduly favour the engineers? Because, says the programme staff officer, they know that while programme men will not bow down to their wishes, engineers would willingly curry favour. Moreover their efforts have paid dividends. Incredibly, today, the number of class I engineering posts in AIR is thrice as many as that of class I programme staff posts. What is more, the cabinet has just approved the scheme to have an organised service for engineers under which there would be an engineer-in-chief at the top assisted by as many as seven chief engineers. The news editors already have an organised service, the central information service, whereas programme staff officers, the backbone of the department, have no such cadre.

More and more stations are going out of the hands of the programme staff and under the control of the engineers. AIR the largest broadcasting network in the world, has 85 stations, 28 of them are treated as state capital stations and have programme staff officers as heads of stations. Of the remaining 57, as many as 30 have engineers as heads. Perhaps, to further placate the engineers, the ministry has mooted a proposal to rotate the head of station's position between the programme staff and the engineers.

Vivek Sengupta

ANDHRA PRADESH

A beautiful, "nude saint" is charged with murder

Hyderabad: She is a young, attractive girl who does not wear any clothes on her body. The only thing she wears is a garland or two. And, to thousands of her devotees, she is not a "shocking lady" but a "nude saint" who is believed to possess supernatural powers. She is 20-year-old Mangamma Avva—the "nude saint" who has her sprawling *ashram* at Jwaramallagutta village in Kurnool district. Scores of devotees from Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra visit her *ashram* everyday.

The first additional district and sessions judge of Kurnool, Mr M. J. Vijayavardhana Rao, released Mangamma Avva and her elder sister, Savithriamma, on bail after they were produced before him in a sensational murder case. According to the prosecution, a 25-year-old youth, N. Ramakoti Reddy was murdered on the night of 11 May allegedly by the "nude saint," her sister and Pullanna.

Ramakoti Reddy's marriage was supposed to have been fixed for 15 May at a nearby village. The two sisters were opposed to the marriage since Ramakoti Reddy had been the lover of Savithriamma. They killed Ramakoti Reddy at his Yelarthi village four days prior to the scheduled date of the marriage. Ramakoti Reddy's body was found near the *ashram* of Mangamma Avva. His brother, Padmanabha Reddy, consequently lodged a complaint with the police on 12 May.

The police swung into action and arrested Mangamma Avva and Savithriamma. On hearing the news of her arrest, the "nude saint's" devotees were annoyed and they started agitations to trace the "real" culprits. They termed the sensational news about Mangamma Avva's involvement as an "ulterior" move to tarnish her image. Some of her devotees arranged for her bail and hired the services of an advocate.

There are many stories about the "nude saint's" supernatural powers. Many devotees say they have gained a lot from her. Their problems have been solved merely by a *darshan* of the nude lady.

Syed Majeedul Hasan

The "nude saint" being taken by the police and (inset) the "saint"

The return of the *bhagwan*

New Delhi: Remember the thumb-sucking baby *bhagwan*? He was disowned by his mother in 1975 for having broken the rules of the Divine Light Mission and accused of becoming a playboy after he was sent to America to spread the spiritual movement. The *bhagwan* Balyogeshwar Param Hans Satgurudev Shri Sant Ji Maharaj alias Prem Pal Singh Rawat (23) has grown in breadth, if not in height, and has also made a comeback to India.

On his last visit to India in 1975 he had been called a "thug" by many. In fact, he had left India in disgrace losing his claim to the leadership of the Divine Light Mission, the international religious movement founded in 1961 by his late father Hans*ji* Maharaj. His mother, Rajeshwari Devi alias Mother Jagat Janani, had renounced him with a "heavy heart." Undaunted the young spiritual leader has now formed a religious movement of his own: the Divine United Organisation.

SONDEEP SHANKAR

Balyogeshwar

Having kept a low profile for so long, his recent visit to Delhi surprised even those who live at the organisation's Delhi headquarters at the Srisant Yoga Ashram in Mehrauli. Said Shankar Lal Goyal, editor of *Bhakti Pravah*, the *ashram*'s newsletter: "I was under the impression that Maharaj*ji* would come only after the ashram was more organised. But he was very kind to allow us his *darshan* earlier." Indeed there was great jubilation when a message from the USA said that Balyogeshwar would be in Delhi on 18 April for the Baisakhi Mahotsav (Spring festival). The exact date of his arrival was, however, kept a secret and the spiritual leader arrived three days earlier than the scheduled date. Reason for the secrecy: Balyogeshwar has been in trouble with revenue and custom officials. Also, the negative publicity he received during his last visit played havoc with his spiritual image. But a comeback was long overdue, for India is where the Maharaj*ji*'s bosses, supposedly America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), want him to be.

The spiritual leader and his bosses want him to set up shop in a big way and it is perhaps for this reason that a 40-acre plot of land was bought on the outskirts of Delhi in the name of the Divine United Organisation in two instalments (on 5 May 1979 and 6 May 1980) for a paltry sum of Rs five lakhs. The organisation has allegedly, also cordoned off an additional area of 300 acres where Shahoorpur village stood once. The land, incidentally, belongs to the village *panchayat*.

Unmindful of Balyogeshwar's disputable past and his shady deals, his devotees came in thousands—there were 40,116 of them—to attend the four-day *satsangh* of whom only a handful were foreigners. Most of the devotees were poor Indians from UP and Bihar villages.

The *satsangh* started every evening after sunset when the 40-acre plot was lit up. Colourful *shamianas* had been put up to accommodate devotees who swayed cheerfully to the tune of "*Jara leela dikha do mere rasiya...*" and "*Tu banka teri banki najariya...*" The spiritual leader gave *darshans* sitting on a high velvet throne-like chair, his bare torso decorated with garlands, his face and hair shimmering with oil. Sometimes he drove around the *ashram* grounds in an open jeep during the day while his devotees stood around in a circle chanting, "*Guru Maharajji ki jai!*" While not on the *ashram* premises, Balyogeshwar spent most of his time in Delhi with his wife, Marilyn Johnson and children, Premlata (6), Hans Pal (4) and Dayalata (2) in his double-storeyed centrally air-conditioned bungalow built only a few months ago.

The Guru*ji*'s life has been shrouded in controversy since he was two years old when perched on the lap of his father he is supposed to have given discourses in Hindi. By the time he was six he started speaking in English. He was eight years old when his father died. It was then that he began addressing congregations independently. In 1970, Balyogeshwar pledged to bring peace to the world but to date he has only brought scandals.

In 1971, he went on his first trip to the USA after which he fell out with his mother and elder brother, Satyapal Singh, who accused him of falling a prey to the nefarious designs of the CIA. In the same year, when he returned from America, his secretary, Bihari Singh, and a foreign devotee were penalised at Delhi airport for possessing foreign currency, jewellery and watches valued at Rs 2.95 lakhs. Thereafter, he was referred to as a smuggler and an impostor masquerading as a *yogi*.

The tempers against Balyogeshwar seem to have cooled for he has decided to return to build his empire and lure members of the poor, illiterate masses into his spiritual den.

Mehru Jaffer

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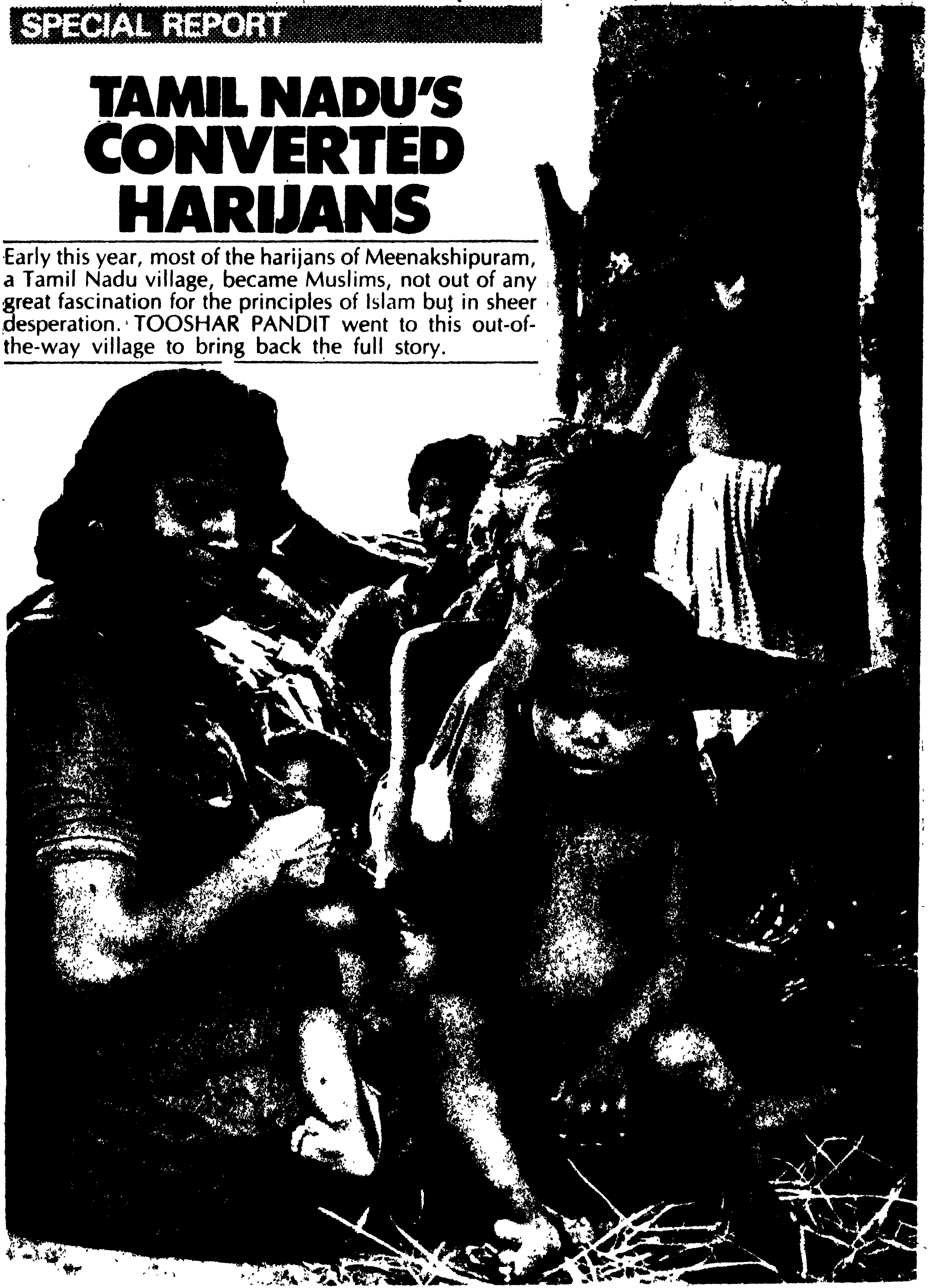
TAMIL NADU'S CONVERTED HARIJANS

Early this year, most of the harijans of Meenakshipuram, a Tamil Nadu village, became Muslims, not out of any great fascination for the principles of Islam but in sheer desperation. TOOSHAR PANDIT went to this out-of-the-way village to bring back the full story.



On the foreground the foundation of the mosque

A small white board on the edge of the Tenkasi-Panpoli highway carrying a Tamil inscription in black identifies the place—Meenakshipuram. It is not a signboard one would normally care to take a second look at. It names an obscure little village (pop: 1300) in Tamil Nadu, some 650 kilometres south west of Madras, surrounded by the western ghat on three sides, almost on the border of Kerala, and about a kilometre's walk from the highway through an uneven, dusty road. The village looks prosperous though, with electricity in about 40 houses, about half a dozen tubewells, and quite a few stucco buildings standing out conspicuously amidst surrounding clusters of decrepit mud huts with coconut palm roofs. Protecting the village from all directions are four deities installed in unostentatious but solid looking temples—Kaliamma in the north, Madaswamy in the east, Karuppan in the west and the inevitable Ganesha in the south. Prayers were important to the villagers and they prayed a lot to keep so many deities pleased. For the inhabitants, most of whom were harijans (1,250 out of 1,300), life was routine and dull.

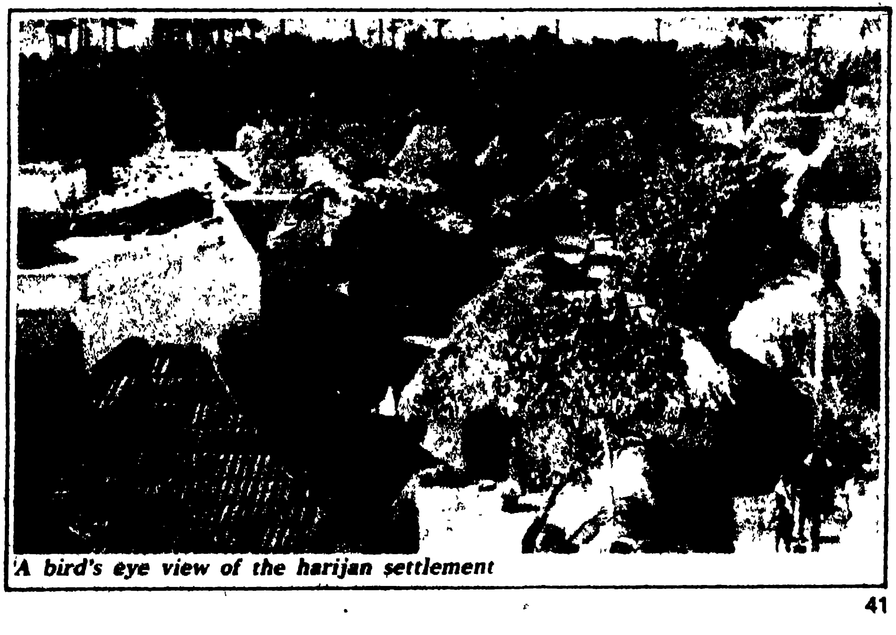
But on Thursday 19 February most of the harijans woke up early and excited. It was the day they had chosen to break from the past—from their traditions and beliefs. After a bath they put on their best clothes. The women, however, stayed back in their huts, while the men, wearing unfamiliar caps, left their houses for the *maidan* at the back of the Kali temple. Some of the caps were gifts from the Jamat-ul-Ulema branches at Tenkasi, the nearest railhead, and Panpoli, a neighbouring country town. But most cap-wearers had stitched the caps themselves. Some also sported well-trimmed beards—again, a new experience for many. The village, which had hardly ever been visited by any outsider, witnessed a sudden rush of visitors that day—mostly Muslim VIPs. Prominent among them were Mr Sahul Hameed, the Muslim League MLA from Kadaynallur constituency of which Meenakshipuram is a part; Mr A. K. Rifai, a former MP; and Mr Abul Hasan Sahad Ali, the Jamat-ul-Ulema chief for that area.

By 11.30 am almost all the male harijans had turned up at the *maidan*. The Jamat chief took the stage. He explained how Islam treated all its followers as equals. Then he chanted the *kalima*. Repeating after him, the villagers knelt down facing west for their first prayers to Allah. In less than an hour, Sunderraj had become Sardar Mohammad, Madaswamy had become Mohammed Soaib, Jabamoni had become Jabarulla Khan, Murugesan had become Mohammed Ismail. Then, some of the visiting women went to bring the harijan women who were still in their houses. With their heads now covered they were escorted to the *maidan* where a *moulvi* (borrowed from the Panpoli mosque) married the wives again to their respective husbands, according to Islamic rites. Unmarried women too got new names and a religion. The conversion was now complete; more than three-fourths of the harijans of the village had abandoned the faith of generations, watched by the deities their forefathers had installed to protect them from the evil. A village which had no Muslim ever before had around 1,000 of them. Meenakshipuram became Rahamatnagar.

A feast followed, and the visiting Muslims shared food from the plates of the harijan converts, which was a novel experience for the harijans: they were equals at a feast! No teashop, in the past, gave them tea out of cups; they had had to sip the beverage out of a coconut shell or a tumbler made out of leaves. They could not draw water from the common wells or drink it from the same tumbler, or for that matter from the same tap, if the caste Hindus were around.

After the feast came announcements: the villagers would get a mosque, a school which would also teach Arabic, and a burial ground where the dead could be buried with dignity. The foundation stone for the mosque was in fact, laid on 3 March by Mr Abdul Samad, the Muslim League MP of the area. By then, however, the converted harijans had already built a thatched shed near a *babul* tree some distance away which would serve as their mosque till a permanent one came up.

The harijans of Meenakshipuram were among the more fortunate of their kind in the country. More than 40 per cent of them were educated. Among them were two MBBS doctors, an agricultural scientist and five graduates. A number of them were well placed in government services and two of the four teachers of the local primary school were harijans. Some 80 families in a community of 180 families owned land, and the biggest landholder in the village was a harijan—Chinna Madaswamy, with about 10 acres of land in his possession. Some 20 harijan houses, four of them concrete structures, had electricity. Those who did not have land, or those who had marginal holdings were cultivators for the Thiruvaduthurai *mutt*



A bird's eye view of the harijan settlement (temple estate) in the adjoining Mekkarai village.

With education and a certain amount of prosperity came the urge to be recognised as social equals by the high caste thevar community, who, of course, were even better off, and lived in another section of the village. The temple of Karuppan marks the division—the harijans stay to the east of the temple, the thevars to the west, segregated from each other by a ribbon of dirt track. The harijans wanted this dividing line to disappear. Thevars did not.

"We were sick of being treated like a dirt," says 37-year-old Sundarraj, now Sardar Mohammed. The caste Hindus would not let a harijan carry a towel on his shoulder; this would be treated as a subtle effort to behave as a social equal. If he did he would certainly invite abuse—*thimir pidicha pallan* (you insolent low caste). The harijan had to carry his towel only under the armpit. Sundarraj was bitter as he talked about the humiliations harijans had to suffer. "If we have to talk to a caste Hindu, we had to bow head, fold our hands, and hold a palm on our mouth so that our saliva did not accidentally fall on the person we were talking to and pollute him. "One of the oldest villagers, Madaswamy (now Mohammed Soaib), 65, cuts into the conversation and says: "They would not even let us hang our towels at the elbow; we had to hang them further down on our arm and keep the arm pressed against the chest, while walking." "Still worse is a harijan sporting a clean starched shirt; it is just not tolerated," said 16-year-old Sarvana Kumar (now Umar Faruque). The caste Hindus made the rules. And any infringement, even if it was unintentional, always invited harsh reactions. More often than not, the harijans suffered in silence although the thevars were in hopeless minority, with a total of just 50 in the village. What gave them clout was their ordained status, and the support of the caste Hindus of the neighbouring areas, and finally of the local administration dominated by the caste Hindus.

The temple of Ganesha

"They would not even let us hang our towels at the elbow; we had to hang them further down on our arm," says Madaswamy, now Md. Soaib.

Occasionally, however, the harijans would protest. Rajendran, a 31-year-old science graduate, had once even complained in a court against a person called Murugiah Thevar for infringing the law which makes untouchability an offence. Murigiah had once seen Rajendran wearing a clean, pressed shirt and trousers, a new pair of *chappals*, and a wrist watch, and abused Rajendran for his temerity: "How dare you...you low caste filth, appear like a dandy before me?" Net result: Rajendran was beaten up. Rajendran then went to the nearest police station to lodge a complaint but the police officer would not register the complaint. "You are alive, aren't you?" the inspector taunted. Yes, he was, but that was no reason to refuse his complaint, Rajendran argued. This angered the inspector even more. He curtly told Rajendran that he could not help him. "You don't even bleed. How do you except me to take any action? On what grounds?" he said. Rajendran persisted, and approached the courts for redress. The court ordered an enquiry. But the police purfunctorily dismissed the allegation as one which could not be proved. Again, a harijan had lost out to a thevar.

But the matter did not rest there. Soon afterwards the police nabbed a couple of harijan youths of the village; they were "suspected" of being involved in some unspecified crime. They were let off a few days later with the warning that if they dared to oppose the 'system' of the area in future, they would receive harsher treatment. Rajendran's failure to get anywhere with his complaint had already quietened most of the harijans. The police now made sure that they remained quiet, and kept to the 'rules' prescribed by the caste Hindus.

"Still worse is a harijan sporting a clean starched shirt; it is just not tolerated," says 16-year old Sarvana Kumar, now Umar Faruque.

But they could not prevent Thangaraj, a young harijan of the village, who had migrated to neighbouring village Mekkarai, from committing the worst possible "social crime"—eloping with a thevar girl of the village. Fearing retaliation, Thangaraj quickly embraced Islam; this brought him instant protection from the Muslims, who are numerically powerful enough in the region to send a Muslim League MP. So when thevars came to beat him up, Thangaraj struck back. In the fight, Pandi Thevar (who was the relative chosen originally to marry the girl who was Thangaraj's wife now) lost one of his legs. The police, however, could do nothing about it. Thangaraj pleaded self-defence, and his plea was accepted because the evidence was overwhelmingly in his favour. But the caste Hindus and police neither forgot the incident nor forgave Thangaraj. They waited for their turn.

Karuppan temple

The opportunity came when two persons of the thevar community were murdered at Mekkarai a few months later. Conveniently for the high caste Hindus, a Tamil daily in a front-page report suggested Thangaraj (now Mohammed Yusuf) might be the culprit. Taking the cue from this, the police inspector of the area, Baluswamy Thevar (since replaced), raided the village and rounded up scores of youths hoping to find Thangaraj. Even the women were beaten up during this raid. And the police threatened that if the villagers did not find Thangaraj for them they were only likely to buy more trouble for themselves. But

"The word harijan is not even as respectable as that four letter word f—," says Thangaswamy, the village headman, who is still a Hindu.

Thangaraj and his wife could not be traced. Then an illicit press was discovered at Meenakshipuram, and it offered the police yet another stick with which to beat the harijans. A number of harijans were arrested and detained for over a month. The harijans were quite worried about their future. The rough tactics of the police only increased the feeling of insecurity that was nagging them. That was how the idea of switching faith germinated. In a material sense, there had been some improvement in the last 33 years, but socially harijans were still unequal "The word *harijan* is not even as respectable as that four letter word f—," says Thangaswamy, the village headman, who is still a Hindu. The villagers had ony two options:to fight for their rights or to suffer in silence. The harijans of Meenakshipuram chose the first. But they also knew that they could not possibly hold out against their powerful adversaries on their own. They needed allies. But where could they look? Some of them who had turned to the church looking for help had hardly gained any benefit in that area.

So they turned their thoughts towards Islam. The Muslims were in a majority in the areas surrounding the village, which was important. But what really convinced the villagers was the fact that Thangaraj, who had by then virtually become a folk-hero, could defy the caste Hindus and yet remain unscathed because he had become a Muslim and the Muslims were solidly behind him. That was why the harijans of Meenakshipuram gathered in an open space at the centre of the village to discuss what would benefit them most. The date : 19 January 1981. The majority including all the three Christian families of the village, was for Islam. "By opting for Islam we were not losing anything since we had nothing to lose," says 65-year-old farmer Vellaichami.

Even then, they pondered over it for another month before formally embracing Islam. After all, it was not easy to shake off old beliefs that were so dear to them just as they had been to their forefathers. Even now, many of the converts involuntarily stop in their stride when passing a temple. If asked to give their names they would invariably say their old Hindu names first. About 15 families who wanted to become Muslims did so only after they had fulfilled a few pledges they had made to the gods. "If we do not fulfil them, some misfortune will make us suffer," says Karuppan.

"If we have to talk to a caste hindu, we had to bow head, fold our hands, and hold a palm on our mouth," says Sundarraj, now Sardar Mahammed.

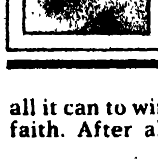
The evidence, therefore, overwhelmingly suggests that if the harijans of Meenakshipuram could have fought the tyranny of the caste Hindus by any means other than changing their faith, they would have preferred that. Their conversion was like a drowning man catching a straw——any straw. And, the harijans were drowning. Today, they who were hardly ever noticed before, have at least succeeded in drawing considerable attention. Even the caste Hindus who never considered them anything better than scum want the harijans back in their old faith. Implied in it, presumably, is the pledge that they will be treated better.

How the thevars view the conversion

"This is the real Meenakshipuram," said Ramalingam, 31, a junior assistant in the *taluk* office at Tenkasi. He is a thevar—a caste Hindu—who lives with others of his community in a section of the village away from the harijan settlement. This section looks cleaner, better organised and more prosperous, though the main source of livelihood of both thevars and harijans is agriculture.

Ramalingam believes, as do others of his community, that no atrocities have been committed against the harijans. He told this reporter, "This kind of thing used to happen ten years back but now it is different. They use the same road as we do...nobody objects. Nor are we more affluent. As a matter of fact we are poorer than them." Thevars feel that the harijans had no love for their village, as many of them earned their bread elsewhere and that they changed faith to attract publicity and escape punishment for many of their misdeeds.

What misdeeds? As an instance, Ramalingam said: "Two of them murdered two of our people in Makkarai and when the culprits were apprehended they simply got themselves converted to *thurukas* (a derogatory term for a Muslim) to save themselves." Conversion, according to the caste Hindus of the village, was done in spite. "But they have not gained anything by it; now they can't even go to the *mutt* (temple estate) to work and that means less money for them," Ramalingam said. He added: "But the Hindu Mahasabha is doing all it can to win them back to their old faith. After all we are all equals."



"But they have not gained anything by it; now they can not even go to the *mutt* to work and that means less money for them," says Ramalingam.

Indeed. Thevars lead a very insulated existence, and before the conversion, as now, they shunned any social contact with the harijans. Nor are the harijans as affluent. For example, while the harijans make do with just one tubewell for drinking water, in a settlement of over 1,000 persons, the thevars have six tubewells for 50 persons. Now that the lone tubewell in the harijan settlement is out of order and as the thevars will not let them draw water from their tubewells, the harijans have to walk some distance to the highway to fetch water.

Besides, while all graduate thevars are employed (there are seven of them), only three of the five graduate harijans have got jobs. Again the harijans, though they possess some land do not have the resources to put the land, to best use Consequently, it is a hand-to-mouth existence and all they can boast of are a few *pucca* houses. Liquor, marriage ceremonies, paying off loans and, of course, feeding large families eat up most of their earnings.

The thevars, on the other hand, save regularly. Almost every thevar family has about three earning members, who together can earn Rs 12,000 annually. And this amount, almost entirely, is saved as the crops they grow take care of their daily requirements. In rural terms, the thevars are an elite.

T. S. V. HARI

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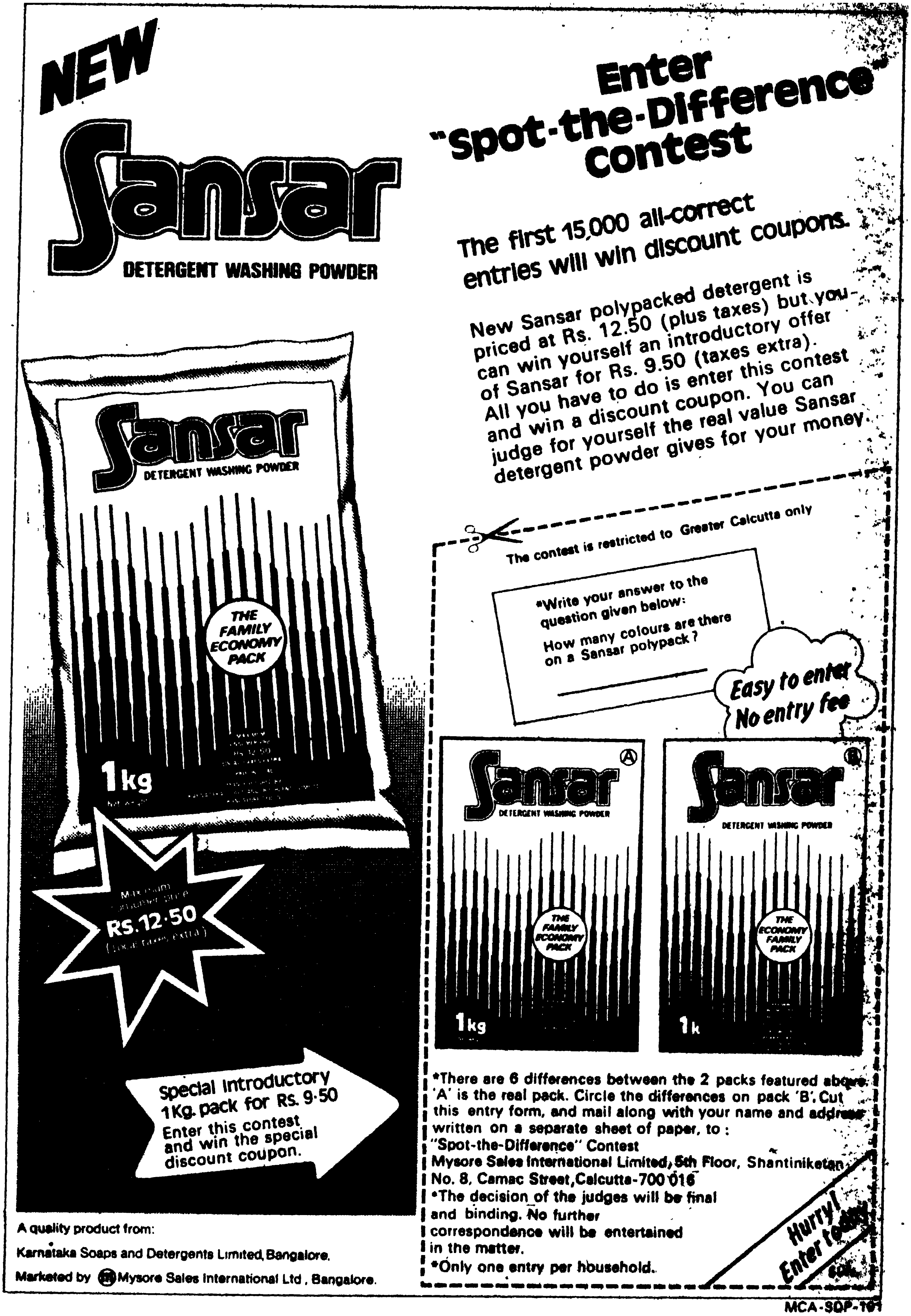

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CONTROVERSY

'The account was not credible'

Bhabani Sen Gupta replies to Mahasweta Devi's charges

My regard for SUNDAY's journalistic standard is jolted by Malabika Bhattacharya's report in the issue of 19 April. A "Devi" is shown to have triumphed over my sustained efforts to corrupt or soften her up with American largesse—a Ford Foundation grant, a trip to America, what else? What can a man like me do when journals belonging to the house of Ananda Bazar Patrika orchestrate their resources to ignore, distort or dismiss in a few words facts given by me and play up the fantasies of a Devi who is a known case of mental and emotional instabilities? Why should SUNDAY ignore the documents I sent *Anandabazar Patrika* more than a month ago and dismiss in two twisted sentences my statement in that daily, while repeating Mahasweta Devi's abracadabra laced with a couple of newly minted lies? Why did SUNDAY not think it professionally necessary to have me interviewed—I was, after all, its regular columnist for more than a year and was actually interviewed not so long ago by its Delhi correspondent for my views on India's security problems during this decade? How can I shrug off what my readers and friends in Calcutta have been telling me since February: that this is a deliberate design to assassinate my character?

I do not grudge the Devi her self-fulfilling fantasies of revolutionary incandescence. It should not be at my cost. I know that reactionaries find it both enjoyable and profitable to indulge certain kinds of deviant leftism. Otherwise how does one account for this lavish columnspace hospitality to the Devi in journals whose newsprint is expensive and miserly? I am as amused to find myself repeatedly described as a "left intellectual" in journals belonging to the ABP house as I was when *New Age* labelled me "a confirmed anti-communist" in December 1979. I am known in India and abroad by my work as a serious and respectful, but not uncritical, student of Indian communism, and of international and national affairs. Bengalis living anywhere in this planet know me by my novels. Am I being "exposed" by the ABP house of my broadly sympathetic, though not uncritical, studies of the CPI(M) as a political force?

What are the allegations of the Devi against me? That I offered her a Ford Foundation grant on the platter sometime in 1979. Totally false, bizarre and stupid. The Ford Foundation does not offer fellowships on the platter and does not appoint touts to scout for takers. The thousands of Indians who have received Ford Foundation fellowships (not I) know how hard the competition is and how demanding the task of submitting even worthwhile research propositions. I had a Ford Foundation assignment in 1979 to sound out a select number of pundits and writers in Calcutta on a concept, since abandoned, to institute a fellowship for creative writers in Asia. The Devi was one of the 20 I consulted. In her rumblings to gullible Calcutta reporters, she has given fictional accounts of my conversation with her. The fact, however, is that I called on her, unannounced, one summer morning, was received by her and a gentleman who shares her apartment and who was getting ready for his office. There was no third person present, except two kids the Devi was helping get ready for school. I explained to her what the fellowship proposal was all about. She perhaps went on spinning yarns in her mind that I was standing in front of her with a bagful of dollars We discussed the fellowship proposal. Her attitude to it was not negative.

Last February the Ford Foundation, apparently because of the assignment I did for them in 1979, asked me if I could recommend one or more writers in Bengal who might be interested to compete for a programme providing monetary grants to writers of non-fiction work of a broadly humanistic character. I forwarded the programme outline with a covering letter to four writers in Calcutta, including the Devi. I was shocked when friends brought to my attention her interviews to *Anandabazar Patrika* and *Business Standard* that she had "rejected" Ford Foundation dollars which I had brought up to her door. At first she said I tried to lure her "indirectly." But she grew bolder, her imagination taking wings as reporters from the Ananda Bazar house asked her for more, until she apparently told Malabika Bhattacharya that what I said to her was: "Just say yes and I'll do the rest." Is this a credible account?

At the beginning, the Devi did not associate me with the invitation she claims to have received to travel in the United States. Later, she made me instrumental for that invitation too. I do not know if she got one and I had absolutely nothing to do with it, but I know several who have turned down, for one reason or another, the same invitation, without brandishing their action as a progressive feather in their cap. In the SUNDAY report, she says that I wrote her a letter in connection with Ford Foundation fellowship before February 1981 which she tore off. Another lie. I wrote her in 1980 only to congratulate her on her Sahitya Akademi honour, to which she replied. I invited her to live with us if she came to Delhi to take the award. She had become a friend in 1977-78, used to visit our Calcutta flat, eat with us, borrow money from my wife and forget all about it, take monetary contributions from me for her noble activities, and entertain us, strangers in Calcutta, with scandals and gossips of the Bengali "intellectual" establishment. How could I know that she had already found me an evil man, so much so that she didn't inform me or my wife after her visit to Delhi in 1980? Such are the sweet rewards of being friendly with a certain type of Bengali "left" intellectual of whom, fortunately, there aren't many.

Sd/- Bhabani Sen Gupta
Professor, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

Dentists say

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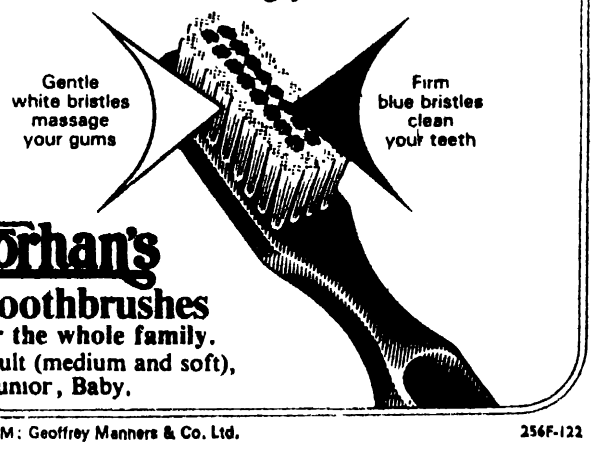
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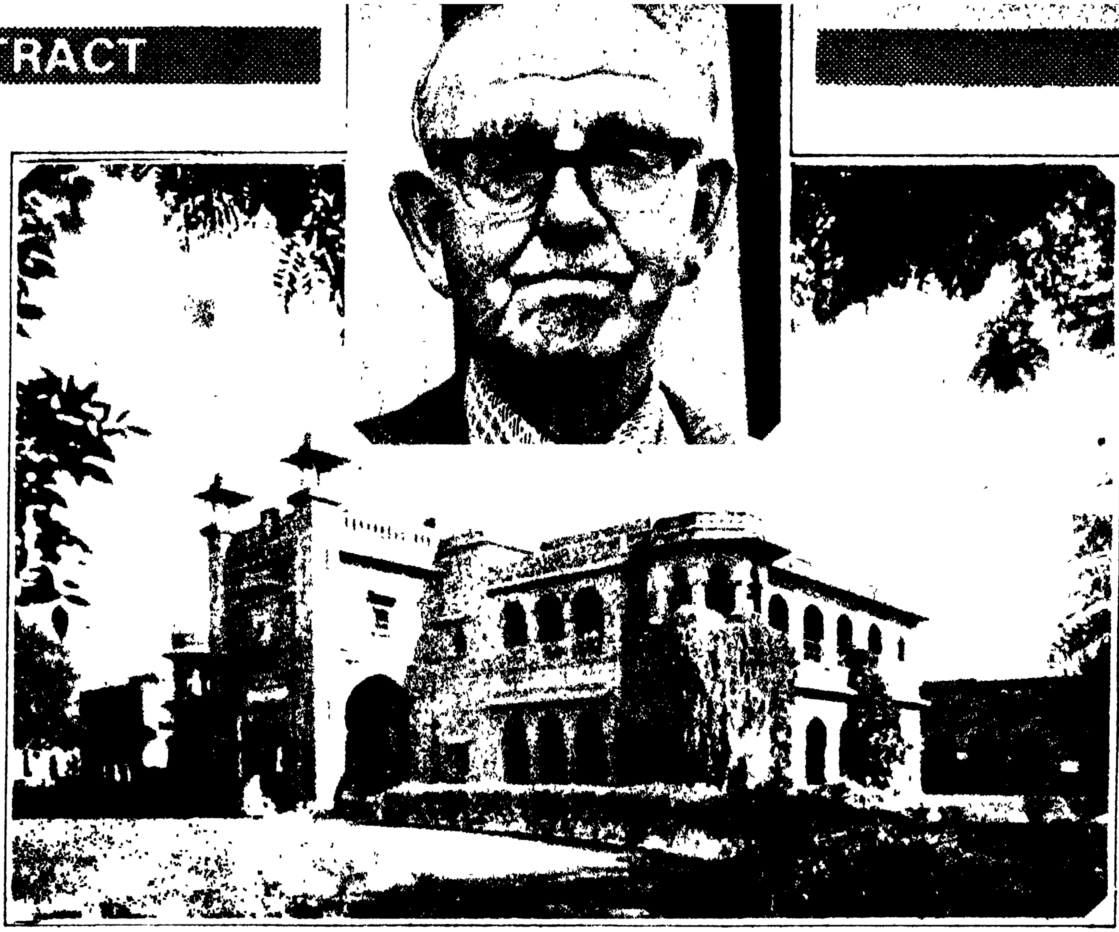


The old college building at Kashmiri Gate (inset) Percival Spear

Evangelists, cricket wars and vegetarian cakes

PERCIVAL SPEAR, an eminent historian who taught at St Stephen's College, Delhi, during the Twenties and Thirties, relives his days at the college. This extract is from the book India Remembered by Percival and Margaret Spear, published by Orient Longman (price Rs 85)

ST. Stephen's College opened in the cold weather at 10 am, with a college assembly. The hall was crowded and conversation buzzed while a roll call was taken by class lecturers. Then the principal and staff filed onto a dais, the staff sitting on each side and the principal at a table in the centre. Notices were given out, praise and blame distributed, references made to 'our friends across the way' (Hindu College. example not to be followed), the family spirit (to be cultivated) and nation building. Then came a short pause while the college hoped a holiday might be declared, cricket being the best gamble, and then the college prayers. These were Christian in spirit without the Christian ascription, designed to enable members of all faiths to take part sincerely. They were read sonorously by the principal ending with the Tagore prayer 'Strike, strike, at the root of penury on our hearts' and 'Into that heaven of freedom let my country awake.' How well we knew 'The dreary desert sand of dead habit' and longed for the 'heaven of freedom' in those moments.

But looking back and setting aside the monotony of a too-rigid formula, I think it is true to say that this approach to the student body, nine-tenths of whom were non-Christians was not without effect. It removed the feeling that they were being "got at" as soon as they set foot in the college, proclaimed the primacy of the spirit in the way all understood, and encouraged a sense of the beyond in a not notably devotional group. The north Indian, unlike the many in other parts of India, has not a very developed devotional sense. Many groups around Delhi, such as the jats, prided themselves on keeping their brahmins in order, reminiscent of the way the Celtic Irish looked after their bishops. To many, of course, the ocean was a mere ceremony, to others a bore, to be evaded if possible, but the evidence of old students suggested that it provided for many at least, a moment of recollection which was valued and remembered.

After the Assembly came a religious period unless there was an address to the whole college. Sometimes there would be a series of religious addresses, by the staff itself or by some visitor like the evangelist Stanley Jones. It was usual to invite visitors to the college to address it, the cordiality of their welcome being heightened by the knowledge that a religious period would be skipped. The central position of the college in Delhi and its many connections brought it many speakers of distinction. Mahatma Gandhi himself came once in my time. Then we would hear the flute like tones of C. F. Andrews with his flowing beard and shining countenance. In the days before World War I he had been almost the second creator of the college. One eloquent lecturer we had, regularly worked himself up into such passion that at his conclusion he staggered backwards into the supporting arms of adjacent professors. If the back door of the dais was open on account of the heat there was real hazard; once he fell right through. Once a president of an American university visited the college. He would refer to the students as "babus" pronounced as *baboos* with the accent on the "oo." This is an honourable term in Bengali parlance, but its use in English was often disrespectful and generally resented by Indians. The reiteration of the phrase was bad enough for the student audience, but the speaker's American twang gave to English ears and keen Indian ones the sound of "baboons." The students took it with stoic calm but we English, struggling with mirth and indignation, had a hard time. There was the benevolent Muslim member of council from Madras who spoke for an hour and a half in polysyllables without any apparent punctuation in a dictation speed drawl; and there was the learned archaeologist who gave a lantern lecture on the Indus Valley and wanted to read a text in the dark at the same time. Armed with a torch he flashed it to and fro, revealing the dark places of the hall but not of his text. Like the Indus Valley script, his meaning remained obscure. The students would behave with exemplary restraint on these occasions, but they had (and probably still have) a habit which was disconcerting to the newcomer. They would walk into a meeting twenty minutes late, sit for five minutes and then march out again. Some would come in time and then walk out within five minutes of the start. I think this habit was partly due to the custom of regarding a public lecture as a *tamasha* or show to be looked at. But another cause was the language difficulty. People would walk out after coming in casually when they found that the proceedings were in English, or in an English which they could not understand. This was not only the Englishman's English but the south Indian's English as well. The south Indian's tendency to add an "a" to the final consonant of words and to run sentences into one syllabic omnibus was mercilessly mocked and inimitably parodied by the north Indians. One could always raise a smile by referring to the "governamenta."

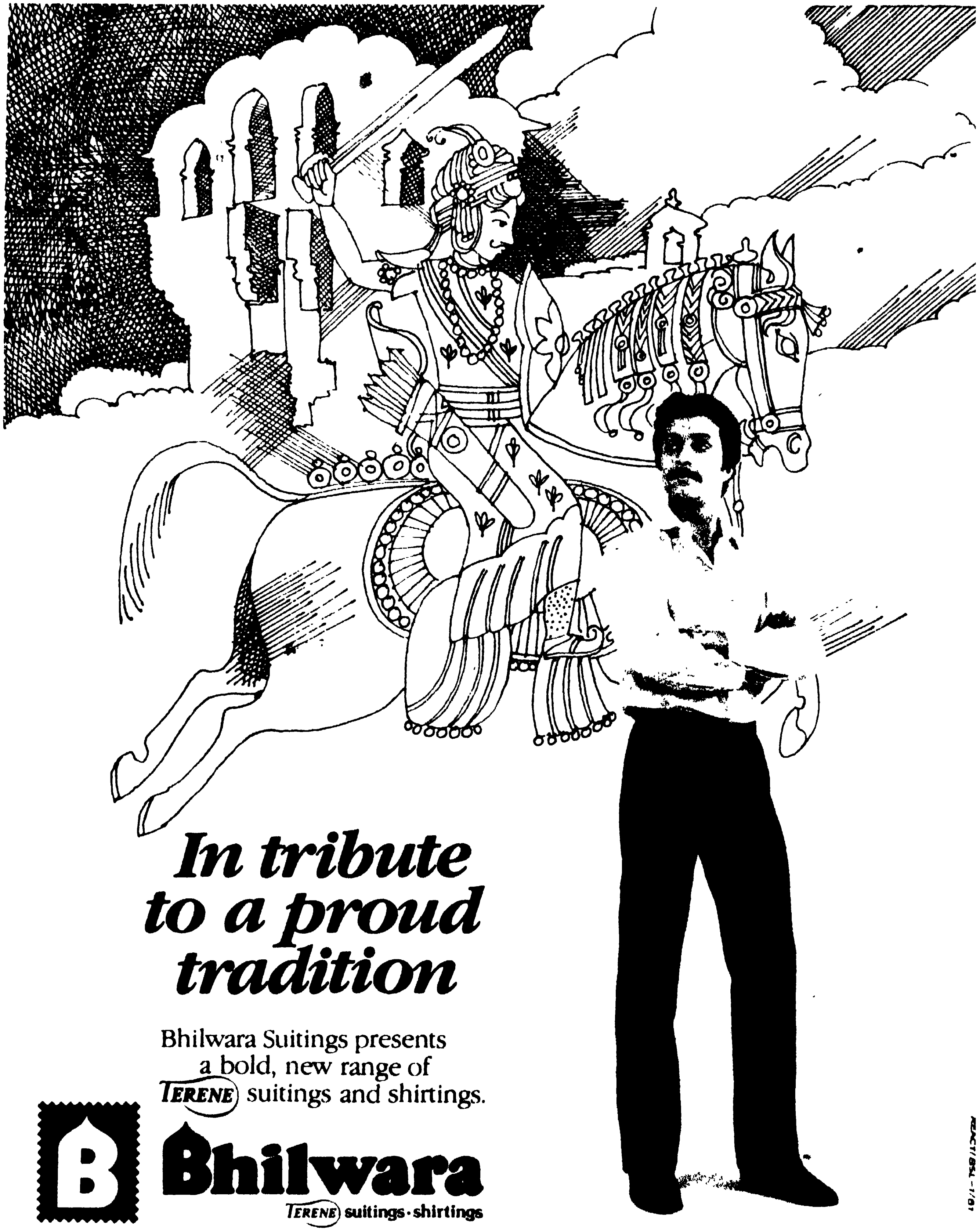
Cambridge Brotherhood members

Main college corridor

The religious period lasted about twenty minutes, when the Christian faith was expounded by the Christian staff. These classes were voluntary in the sense that you could contract out, and from the fact that disciplinary action was rarely taken if you absented yourself. In these circumstances it was surprising that so many attended. They were the most difficult classes of the day, but attention could usually be obtained for the exposition of the gospel, and in the hands of an able teacher could be tense and wrapt in the case of St. John. Here were touched hidden chords of sympathy with the imbedded presuppositions of Indian thought.

There followed the English classes which all had to attend, and then the subject lectures, until about one o'clock. In the hot weather term (May-June) the college opened at 7 am and finished by 11 am so that the students could return before the greatest heat. The question of holidays was then acute, made the more serious by the fact that most of the great Hindu festivals which were public holidays occurred in the cold weather. The Muslim ones went round the calendar and they were usually absent too. The rule was that a pretext must be found but wide latitude of choice was permissible. Once, on a particularly hot June day, I declared a holiday to celebrate the battle of Waterloo, and for a few moments there was unwanted enthusiasm for a British success.

College life did not end with the classes. In the afternoons there was an active programme of games—tennis, cricket, football and hockey—on the spacious tree-lined sports ground outside Kashmere Gate. Tennis had most votaries and a high standard, but cricket had pride of place. Introduced as a nostalgic exercise by the first English lecturers, cricket had long been adopted by the Indian public as its own. Its skill, its subtlety and craft combined with its leisureliness to give it an irresistible attraction. The most enthusiastic supporter of all was the Indian principal. The annual contest with the Hindu College was more of a gladiatorial show than a game. The rival principals sat amid mounting tension on opposite sides of the field surrounded by their supporters, like generals of old time contending



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armies. Only elephants were wanting to complete the similitude of Mughal rivals for the throne. The two teams had lesser *durbars* in other corners of the field. Each ball was like the discharge of a gun and each knock a knell for the other side. The students of both colleges cheerfully lined the sides of the field and there was usually shocked surprise on our side at the behaviour of the other. We could usually count on two or three days' holiday unless disaster overtook our team in the first few hours.

In the evenings there was much activity with college societies of various kinds. A third of the students lived in nearby hostels and more than another third in the city, so that access was easy. The college encouraged the students to study their own religions as well as Christianity and so there were Muslim and Hindu religious associations. Every year a "Gita" class was started but it was rarely heard of after Christmas. The fact was that the north Indian Hindu was not particularly religious. The only way to arouse much interest in its religion was by giving him the impression that you were attacking it. There were literary societies. There was the inevitable Bengali association and there were the dramatic societies. The Urdu society put on shows from time to time which could be uproariously funny, but also seemed to be in need of censorship. Later it was led by a literary young lecturer who wrote his own plays. He sought to introduce contemporary social themes into his plays, the central figure of which was always a "serious young man" caught on the horns of some social dilemma and moving reflectively to disaster. *"Afsos! afsos!"* (alas! alas!) is the word which lingers in the mind from these performances. Like other would-be tragic writers my friend could write farces with effortless ease.

But the dramatic thunder was stolen by the Shakespeare society started in the year of my arrival by a young English lecturer to whom Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Shelley formed a trio almost as important as the Trinity. His lectures on these poets attained such a pitch of intensity that when once a rustic student who was hard of understanding murmured, 'five minutes more,' it was taken as sacrilege. The lecturer gathered up his books and swept out. The class was dumbfounded; it was only after a sorrowful deputation had assured him that no disrespect was intended to Wordsworth and that the young delinquent was too ignorant to realise the enormity of what he had done, that he consented to continue the course. Our students lacked neither humour nor a sense of the ridiculous. This incident is a testimony to the power which intense conviction can wield. Our Shakespearian was an excellent producer; he had the genius of an infinite capacity for taking pains, and the gift of getting people to work together. The large casts occupied a number of people; the frequent and prolonged rehearsals kept interest alive while the ultimate public performances set the seal of achievement on the whole effort. There is no doubt that this was one of the most vital parts of the college life. The Indian love of Shakespeare is as genuine as their love of cricket.

About a third of the students lived in hostels in charge of Christian superintendents. Two of these had about forty members each and one was smaller. One had an entrance which looked like a Mughal afterthought, with nothing more behind than a yard lined with verandahed rooms. The other was a modern erection of brick and concrete built round a court over shops. The influence of buildings was never more clearly shown for his hostel always showed an alertness, a vigour and a sense of community which the other could never rival. The third hostel rambled through some old buildings, and was the reported abode of Jains who must not eat after dark. The new hostel seemed to attract the more alert youths from New Delhi or the Punjab; the other the rustics. There were a group of jats from Rohtak to whom education was still relatively new and some of whose fathers had had to be fetched back from their villages to which they had fled because of the strangeness of city life. In the Twenties they were fast becoming sophisticated but they would still seek leave two or three times a term to fetch *ghee* (clarified butter) from the purer air of the countryside. This they would pour down their throats in a continuous stream without spoon or ladle before admiring groups. They were the strong men of the college and also the butts of much popular humour. Stories would begin 'a brahmin met a jat,' or 'a jat met a brahmin,' both being certain preludes to jat discomfiture in a battle of wits.

Life in these hostels was intimate and the interchange of influence between superintendent and students continuous. Amongst the students themselves they formed crucibles of social pressure for they were too small to break up into cliques while too large for the communal groups to dissolve into individuals. Two vital elements in the process were the throwing of communities into intimate personal contact, and the effects of interdining. The hostels were unusually cosmopolitan, even for India, because of the diverse elements which made up the official class in New Delhi and the middle class in the city and the Punjab. There were city and Punjabi Muslims, a Bengali group from New Delhi, men from Uttar Pradesh, Marathas from Bombay, southerners from Madras, a hillman or two and an occasional Rajput. These were divided between two messes, vegetarian and non-vegetarian. This simple division was itself at that time regarded as almost revolutionary. For it involved the mingling of several castes in the vegetarian mess and of Muslims and Christians with Hindus in the non-vegetarian. Neither Hindus nor Muslims of the middle class of northern India at this time commonly objected to eating with Christians, but it was otherwise with each other. These messes, with all their petty disputes and perplexities, were really educative in promoting mutual understanding and public spirit. Of course the students were in advance of their elders and were mostly for 'no distinction in caste, colour, creed or sex.' The social environment too often cooled their ardour in later days, but it was devices such as these which gave an impulse to Indian society whose results are visible today. In the vegetarian mess there were special refinements of distinction. There was often controversy as to whether onions should be served at the table. Tolerance suggested their sitting at one end of the table so that sensitive noses could take refuge at the other end, but from time to time there would be a walk-out and a rival non-onion mess established. Stricter spirits still objected to any article suggestive of blood, so that the ruddy beetroot would become a centre of argument. On the whole there was progress through continuing tension. The one group who could not be got to cooperate was the Jains, who were not only strict non-onion, non-beetroot vegetarians, but had to dine before sunset, lest in the dark they should unwittingly consume insects and so take life. The coming of electric light had not then changed their traditional scruple.

The college dining life was crowned by the institution of a monthly college dinner held in the college hall. It was a bold and imaginative step taken by the Indian principal and it proved a great success. The whole college was invited and up to three quarters of them attended at a time. In fact only the little Jain community were permanent absentees. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food was served on opposite sides of the hall where all sat down as they pleased. The staff attended with their wives (in the case of the Christians). The principal opened the proceedings with a sonorous and heartfelt grace 'Lord God, bless our food and fellowship together.' The custom was unique in northern India and had a perceptible effect on public opinion. Indians dearly love a social occasion and found this one hard to resist. A curious distinction was often made between tea parties and other meals. People of all groups amongst the public as well as in the college, would cheerfully meet together for tea functions when they would have misgivings about any other meal. The factor of cooked food was not decisive for they would happily eat European cakes and Indian sweetmeats about the caste of whose cooks they had no knowledge and (if they thought at all about it) would have had the gravest misgivings. This was a great help in entertaining students, for your class tea party was a never failing success. In contrast to a staunch Hindu professor who went to the leading restaurant of the day and demanded "vegetarian" cakes (without eggs) I could point to a whole series of conversions to the cult of chocolate cake, eggs, chocolate and all. ■

KHAAS BAAT

DURGAPRASAD

Sareeka . sexy!

So finally the well-known *Chimpu-Padmini* affair has earned its quota of notoriety. Chimpu *(Rajeev Kapoor)*, like brother *Rishi*, has started paying attention to people who matter, though one wonders why some people—*Simi* for instance—are getting extra-special attention. Apparently, Padmini, wiser and quick on the uptake, is bent on doing her bit of kicking the lower rungs to climb up and so, instead of waiting for Chimpu to ditch her she has ditched him instead. And what of all the talk about the potential *Kapoor bahu* (wife)? Looks like Padmini has other plans up her sleeves, for she is making no secret of the fact that she has her own ambitions to fulfil and is certainly not going to give up her glamorous career just to become a *pallav*-hugging, *paav-padoing* (feet touching) wife of the Kapoor family.

And who do you think *Shabana* is going around with, these days? *Marc Zuber*, her latest co-star. Of course, Marc is new to the city and needs to be shown around. But then, it may be something more than just an eagerness to introduce the city to the newcomer that is making Shabana do the rounds. But one thing is still unexplained: why is ex-boyfriend *Shekhar Kapoor* still seen in Shabana's company?

Aruna Irani is trying her best to change her image of being a vamp in real life after her ex-husband, *Mehmood*, and a few of her colleagues have spoken up against her. She has, in the past done everything possible to gain favour with her promoters, be they producers or heroes, and had even gone to the extent of cheating other stars of roles and films, originally meant for them These days, she is acting like a goody-goody girl and stomping her foot in rage and saying that all she gets are bitchy roles in certain films. Perhaps she is not doing the right thing, for doesn't the vampish role make the best of her abilities?

Shabana . apex of the triangle

PRABHAT KUMAR

The attitude of stars appears to have undergone a sea change recently. *Zeenat*, once the fast-buck producers' delight, has relinquished the sex-symbol title. Just the opposite seems to have happened to *Sareeka*: with her thin face, bony figure and pencil narrow mouth, she thrusts out her assets and all but shouts the message, "Look-at-me-I-am-sexy!"

JAYANT DAS

Simi : a name that matters

Zarina Wahab is going the *Rajesh Khanna* way: taking life easy. Frankly, there is little else the actress can do. When she started her career after being recommended by none other than *Jaya Bhaduri*, most people, including Zarina, thought she would slip into the place vacated by Jaya. Unfortunately, she could not make it in the rat-race: Zarina succeeded in getting just a handful of films of *Rajshree* productions, all of which did only average business. And then came personal and professional problems with co-stars and producers. So Zarina decided to call it quits. A wise move indeed, considering that her age is catching up on her too!

Aruna Irani : vamp in real life

RAJU UPADHYAY

KHAAS BAAT

Smitha: the quick climb to fame

Madhavi has recently acquired a strange kind of chaperone: her younger sister *Keerthi*. Of course, it is primarily to keep an eye on her elder sister, but Madhavi's ambitious father seems to have other motives as well. Now that Madhavi has been chosen for a couple of Hindi films, if they do moderate business, father thinks that Madhavi's way to Bombay is just the next step. And who else is there to fill up the place vacated by Madhavi in the south than her own sister, who resembles the actress considerably?

When *Mangalsutra* was half-way through, distributors and financier, G. N. Shah who saw the rushes were rather impressed with *Anant Nag*. So Shah signed Nag and *Rekha* for another film to be directed by *B. Vijay*, the man responsible for *Mangalsutra*. But now that *Mangalsutra* has not become much of a hit in the box-office, chances of the other film going into production are rather slim. No wonder, Anant Nag—for whom *Mangalsutra* is the second Hindi film, *Ankur* being the first—is looking rather depressed.

Another star has been knocked off by the glamour in Bombay: *Rati Agnihotri*. Now that she has about two dozen Hindi films in Bombay on her hands, including ones with *B. R. Chopra* and *Raj Kapoor*, her father feels it is safe to make a few comments about her daughter's abilities and the mentality of directors down south. Father, *Roop Agnihotri*, believes that except for "*K. Balachander* and *Bharatiraja*" all other directors emphasised her glamour. "But she has so much of dramatic potential...in a way Rati's face is her misfortune." And what of Rati? Of course, she has fond memories of her career in the south, but she too feels that she has not been given the roles she could excel in: "Unless I am assigned the kind of role into which I can get my teeth, tell me how can I prove my talent as an actress? It is a male-

Rajnikant

dominated industry." Well even while wishing Rati all the luck to prove herself, one wonders what makes Rati think that Bombay is free from male chauvinism.

PIOUSJI

Meera: all for exposure

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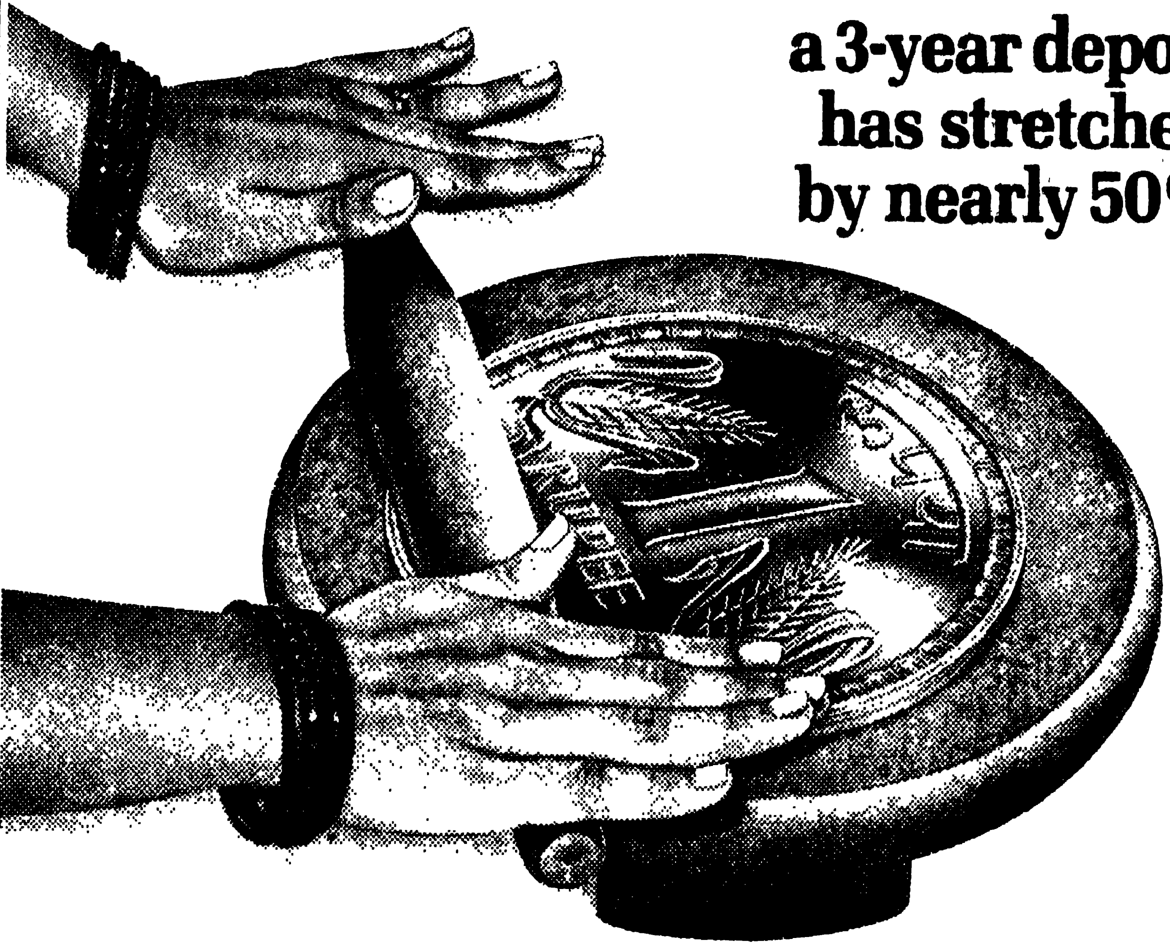

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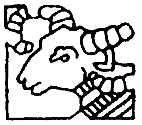
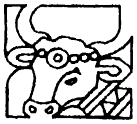
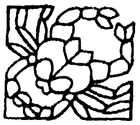


ARIES (15 April—14 May) You will make steady progress this week. You will gain through property matters or insurance policies. You are advised to conserve your energies and resources. Your intuitions will prove to be fruitful especially in the affairs related to your heart. Your domestic front will be calm. A promotion is likely by the end of the week.**Good dates:** 14, 16 and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) You will achieve success provided you continue to concentrate on your professional front. You are advised to be patient and satisfied with the slow improvement in your financial position. Do not act hastily. Look after the health of your family members. You will enjoy a happy social life. You will gain confidence in yourself in the process. **Good dates:** 15, 17 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 3 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.

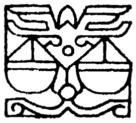
GEMINI (15 June—14 July) You are advised to guard yourself against deception. Refrain from making any important decision. Do not make any changes in your plans unless it is essential. The time is not favourable for starting a new venture. Let intuition be your guide. Utilise the opportunities to the utmost. **Good dates:** 16, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** East.



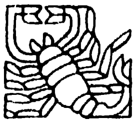
CANCER (15 July—14 August) Your ability to work hard and your ambition will lead you to success. But you are advised to avoid overstrain. Exercise caution while dealing with elderly relatives. Secret matters will make steady progress. Young people and intellectuals will contribute to your success and well being. You will gain new friends. You may go on a journey. You will make some changes during this week. **Good dates:** 14, 15 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.

LEO (15 August—14 September) This week you will be able to solve all your problems especially those related to financial matters. Courage, self confidence and fortitude will help you to overcome all your problems. Those of you who are working may get transfer orders. You will be highly praised by your friends and relatives. **Good dates:** 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-west.

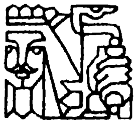
VIRGO (15 September—14 October) In spite of your efforts the results will not be up to your expectations. You may have to go through physical as well as mental strain. You are advised to control your temper Legal matters and debts will cause anxiety. You are advised to stay away from a questionable romance. Take care of the health of your family members **Good dates:** 15, 16 and 19 **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North-east.



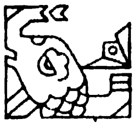
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This will prove to be a pleasant and happy week for you Your friends and relatives will contribute to your happiness You might not gain financially but this should not upset you. Letters will bring good tidings Do not be guided by your impulses and go in for changes **Good dates:** 17, 18 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 5 and 8. **Favourable directions:** South and west



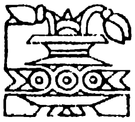
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This will prove to be a very lucky week for you. Push all your business interests to the utmost. Try for promotions in your professions The time is favourable for romance and even for correspondence related to marriage. Your domestic front will be calmYou are expected to show courage in your dealings. The opposite sex will prove to be exceptionally helpful Letters will bring good tidings. **Good dates:** 14, 17 and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North-west.



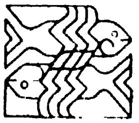
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) You are advised to keep your employers in good humour. Concentrate on your business front. Take advice from elders and friends to solve your problems. The time is not favourable for romance. A pleasant surprise is waiting for you in the end of the week. Conserve your energies. Do not indulge in gambling and speculation **Good dates:** 18 and 19**Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South-east.



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) You will gain through elders but this might be followed by heavy expenditure and even litigation. Do not be hostile towards people around you. You will make a steady progress in your intellectual and artistic pursuits Your health will improve Make changes only after careful deliberations. Avoid getting into quarrels **Good dates:** 15, 18 and 20. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 6 and 9 **Favourable direction:** North



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) You are advised to check extravagance Do not spend money on entertaining friends You may have to face difficulties on your financial front Exercise utmost caution while dealing with legal matters A journey with your family will prove to be a happy one **Good dates:** 14, 17 and 19 **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 8 **Favourable direction:** North-west



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This week your stars are in your favour You will make steady progress. You will gain through elders, employers and insurance policies Secret associations will prove to be helpful You are expected to check your extravagant tendencies Do not neglect your work You are advised to conserve your resources. Your intellectual activities will make steady progress. Your health will improve **Good dates:** 15, 19 and 20 **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 8 **Favourable direction:** North-west

When people
praise my lustrous,
well-groomed hair,
I know they are
praising me...

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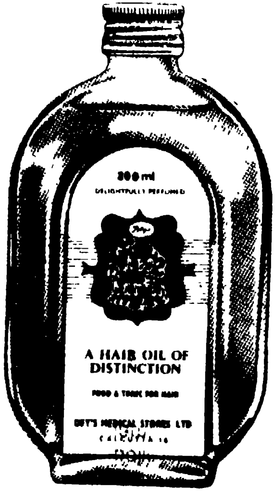

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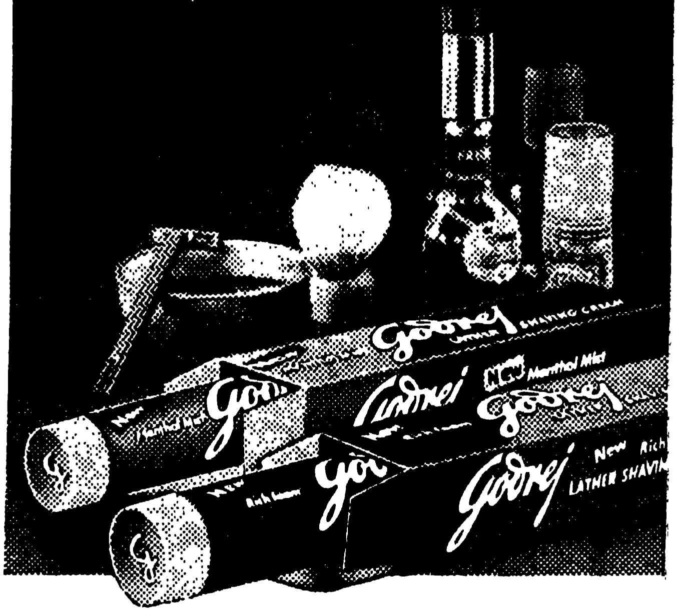

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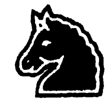
chess



Psycho-analysis

It is a curious but common idiosyncrasy of the chess-player that defeat always requires explanation. A cold, headache, stomach ache, voodoo, witchcraft, ingrowing toenails – any excuse for losing a game. The famous Polish grandmaster Tartakover once quipped that he had never in his life beaten anybody whose health was one hundred per cent. It is strange that by contrast victory requires no medical explanation. Nobody ever won a game because he didn't have toothache.

This one-sided assumption that losing is the effect of some exterior cause and that winning is merely the result of removing that exterior cause perhaps sheds some deal of light on the psychology of chess-players. It may also shed some light on to the psychology of Nikolai Krogius, author of **Psychology in Chess** (Pitman, £4 95). Krogius is not only a chess grandmaster but also a psychologist in his own right, yet this does not prevent him from falling into the trap of demoting psychology to the same role as the headache, merely the explanation of one player's failure, rather than trying also to use it to explain the other player's success. It would be untrue and unfair to say that nowhere in the book does he consider the constructive aspects of psychological factors in chess, but the general tone is one of trying to explain mistakes on the tacit assumption that mistakes require explanation. But why do they require explanation? Our understanding of chess is good but not total. Thought mechanisms enable us to find the move which is *probably* best, but by no means certainly so. Nine times out of ten we find the right move, but why on the tenth occasion must there be some physical ailment or Freudian slip Do we not have the right to be just plain unlucky?

Of course I do not want to argue that chess is just a game of chance and nothing more, but merely that luck *does* play a role in chess and that any attempt to find a deep scientific explanation for all our blunders is perhaps a little pretentious. On the other hand psychology certainly is a factor in competitive chess, particularly at the higher levels, and Krogius gives us a great deal of insight into the psychological aspects of tournament play. His experience is very wide and his views make fascinating reading whether you happen to agree with them or not.

Unfortunately, the text, which is collated from translations of various articles by Krogius, was written almost entirely before 1970 with the result that it contains little comment on probably the two greatest psychological duels of all time, namely the Fischer-Spassky and Karpov-Korchnoi world championship matches. In a one-against-one situation drawn over a long period of time, the importance of psychological factors is amplified considerably. It would indeed have been interesting to read Krogius's opinions. Even in their absence, 'Psychology in Chess' is well worth reading, if only to enable you to produce the most articulate and imposing reasons why you lost your queen

An example, from the book in which Krogius recalls one of his own worst defeats. The psychological explanation was that he needed to win. It can happen. I know.

White: Lisitsin Black: Krogius

1. N—KB3, P—KB4; 2. P—Q3, N—KB3; 3. P—K4, P x P; 4. P x P, N x P; 5. B—Q3, N—B3; 6. N—N5, P—KN3; 7. P—KR4, P—Q3; 8. P—R5, P x P; 9. B x P, N x B; 10. Q—R5+, K—Q2; 11. N—B7, Resigns.

King in distress

White: Matanovic. Black: Bednarski

Sicilian Defence

1. P—K4, P—QB4; 2. N—KB3, P—K3; 3. P—Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, N—KB3; 5. N—QB3, B—N5; 6. P—K5, N—Q4; 7. Q—N4, K—B1; 8. P—QR3, B—R4; 9. B—Q2, N x N; 10. P x N, P—Q3; 11. P x P, Q x P; 12. Q—R5, P—B4; 13. B—QN5, N—Q2; 14. O—O, N—B3; 15. Q—R4, N—K5; 16. QR—Q1, Q—K2; 17. Q—R3, N x B; 18. R x N, Q x P; 19. N x BP, P x N; 20. R—K1, Q x P; 21. Q—R5, P—KN3; 22. Q—R4, B—K3; 23. R x B, Q—R5+; 24. B—B1, B x R; 25. Q—K7+, K—N1; 26. R—KB6, Resigns (26. . . ., Q—R7; 27. P—QB4).

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

There have been several books on pairs play, and **Winning Pairs Technique**, by Jannersten and Wohlin (Gollancz £4 95), occupies the centre of the field It contains all the obvious instruction but is not especially original, consisting mainly of hands illustrating various aspects of the pairs game Simple deals such as this are instructive

Dealer South Game all

♠ 6 4 3
♥ A Q 8 4
♦ 6 4
♣ 7 5 3 2

♠ J 9 5
♥ 7 5 3
♦ A Q 10 9
♣ Q J 10

N
W E
S

♠ Q 10 8 7
♥ 6
♦ J 8 5
♣ 9 8 6 4 K

♠ A K 2
♥ K J 10 9 2
♦ K 7 3 2
♣ A

South plays in Four Hearts and the Queen of clubs is led Declarer must not fall into the trap of entering dummy to play a diamond, because this gives the defence a chance to get in three rounds of trumps before any diamond has been ruffed A low diamond from hand at trick two is safer. Not a good play at match points? It is because if East holds ♦ A, then ♦ K will provide a spade discard from the table Many of the later deals belong to the category of Wohlin Hands, much appreciated by readers of the IBPA bulletin Hugh Kelsey's editorship is a guarantee of good presentation

•

Competitive Bidding, by Jeremy Flint and Richard Sharp (Cassell, £6 25), also has a chapter on pairs play There is a tendency to surprise A deal is described where opponents, after an auction that is to some degree limited, bid to Four Spades and South, the opening leader, holds

♠ 96 ♥ J432 ♦ 8654 ♣ J92

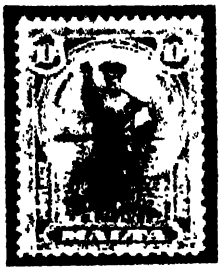
The clever fellow, needing a good result on the last board, doubles The declarer, having found North with three winners, naively plays South for the Queen of trumps and goes down

This is just silly If you need a good result, you must hope to save a trick in the play

There are other observations that suggest divided authorship, but the book contains much valuable and expert advice on situations that commonly cause difficulty defence to 1NT defence to the Multi, competitive doubles and cue-bids, and many areas that are comparatively uncharted.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



In 1926 the Maltese Government decided that for ease of accounting there should be separate series of stamps for postage and for revenue purposes The current series of 17 pictorials, inscribed POSTAGE & REVENUE, was accordingly overprinted with the single word POSTAGE. Later in 1926 a new series of 17 pictorials was issued. They included this 10s stamp showing a statue of St Paul and were inscribed simply POSTAGE In 1928 the policy was reversed and all the stamps were overprinted POSTAGE AND REVENUE so that they could be used for both duties. Finally, in 1930, the stamps were reissued with the designs amended to read POSTAGE - REVENUE There are thus three types of the 10s stamp, each now costing about £150 Lower values of the various series are fortunately less expensive.

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. What is protean, as opposed to the protein that is a group of nitrogenous substances that plays an important role in the bodies of plants and animals?
2. The Smithsonian, a great scientific and cultural institution in Washington D. C. was founded by James Macie Smithson (1765-1829). To which country did he belong?
3. What is Vansittartism?
4. What is a prospect glass used for?
5. Among gamblers what is ice?

ANSWERS

1. Originating from Proteus, the ancient Greek seagod who assumed many shapes to evade having to tell the future, protean means variable or inconsistent.
2. England.
3. It is extreme anti-Germanism, and comes from the name of Lord Vansittart, (1881-1957), a British diplomat.
4. Viewing things that are at a distance. It is also known as a telescope or field glass, depending on its range.
5. Hush money paid to police and officials to overlook illegal gambling in Britain.

his india

prize rs. 30 for the entry given first

RAKSHASBHUVAN: At a mass wedding some brides were pregnant and some others mothers while many bridegrooms had been sterilised years ago. Twentythree such tribal couples were united in wedlock at this small village on Tuesday (5 May). Poverty has coverted convenience into custom. The custom allows a young boy and girl to live like husband and wife for years together till they can raise enough funds to solemnise their marriage—*Indian Express* (R. Anand, Hyderabad)

BOMBAY: They love his money, but hate him. The so-called high-caste Hindus frequently borrow money from a harijan money-lender in Gujarat, but do not touch him—and they touch the money only after sprinkling water on it to "purify" it. Union minister of state for home Yogendra Makwana today (19 May) said. Narrating another case, Mr Makwana said the high-caste dominated Lucknow University had denied a job to a highly qualified harijan woman and even gone to the extent of scrapping the famous Hindi poet Maithili Sharan Gupta's literature from the syllabus because she was to teach the subject—*Deccan Chronicle* (Pankaj MehrotraHyderabad)

CHITTOOR: It's unanimous election by auction at Narigapalli *gram panchayat* of this *samiti*. The posts of *sarpanch*, *upa sarpanch* and members, including reserved members were sold and totally Rs 22,850 was earned. All this to effect unanimous election to grab the prized reward announced by the government for unanimous election. The highest bidder who got the *sarpanch* post, Mr Krishnama Naidu, paid Rs 12,500 and outbid his rival, his brother-in-law Mr Peddabba Naidu, who had to settle for the *upa sarpanch* post paying Rs 2,750. The membership was sold at Rs 2,000 and the reserved membership for Rs 600. This novel method of 'unanimously electing' the *gram panchayat* is getting popular with other *gram panchayats* too as it carries a reward of Rs 5,000 from the government—*Sunday Standard* (S. Krishna Murthy, Bangalore)

BOMBAY: It was not the shooting of a Hindi thriller at Bandra in north Bombay when a film producer along with his accomplices forcibly abducted a bank employee and made him sign a document. Behind the bizarre plot executed on 7 May, was the mastermind of a film producer, Liaquat Ali Khan, who was in dire need of money to complete his unfinished film *Kudrat Ka Insaaf* (Nature's verdict). Khan arrested on 14 May, confessed that he undertook the "job" of evicting the tenants of a bungalow. The bank employee was one of the tenants. He undertook the "job" at the behest of one Arun Bhatkal, a relative of the bungalow owner for a price of Rs 2 lakh. Now Khan, along with Bhatkal and four others, is cooling his heels in lock-up—*Hindustan Times* (Sanjeev Bhatnagar, New Delhi)

The demand for a motorcycle as part of dowry by a bridegroom not only deprived him of the bride but also resulted in his being beaten up and paraded naked on the streets of Newton-Chikli town in Chindwara district last week. The bridegroom and his friends from Sagar insisted on getting a motorcycle before moving to the *havan mandap*. The girl's father offered Rs 4,000 in cash, but the bridegroom's alleged obstinacy led to his being locked up with his friends by the girl's relatives. They were kept without food for eight hours and then beaten up and paraded in the town. The bridegroom and his party were allowed to go only after signing an agreement to pay Rs 25,000 for breach of promise to marry—*Times of India* (V. R. Menon, New Delhi)

BOMBAY: A major disaster was averted at the Bombay airport when a violent bull almost ran into a Boeing 737 jet. The commander of the Madras-bound jet which was taxying to the take-off point swung the aircraft to the side strip of the taxiway and saved the aircraft and the bull. It was stated that the bull got loose and entered the airport from the Indian Airlines security gate at the old airport. The owner, a *bhayya* was stopped at the gate but the bull panicked and ran amuck. As it came out of the technical headquarters to the main runway, it was chased by the airport staff who were on the usual runway inspection. They also informed the control tower of the bull at large. Only a minute before, an Avro HS 748 bound for Hyderabad had taken off. However, the bull brushed aside all those who came in its way and escaped through a gate near IA engineering complex at Sahar. Two airport authority staff, including the airport manager on duty, suffered minor injuries in the effort to catch the bull. The Madras-bound aircraft took off as usual. Mr R. D. Pradhan, general manager of the Bombay airport stated that the cattle and birds have become a menace to aircraft movement at Bombay airport due to cattle sheds, *zopadpattis* and unauthorised mutton shops in the airport periphery—*Indian Express* (Rashbehari Das, Calcutta)

without comment

They call themselves Congress(U). In fact, this party should be renamed Congress(Q):the whole lot of them are queing up to secure entry into our party—Zail Singh, union home minister quoted in *Organiser*

Congress(U) president Devaraj Urs is trying day and night to join the Congress(I); if he had received a call from Mrs Gandhi, he would have joined the party before Mr Y. B. Chavan—R. Gundu Rao, Karnataka CM

People know to what extent to believe Mr Gundu Rao. He does not hesitate to speak untruth—Devaraj Urs, Congress(U) president

I think everybody will join our party without bargaining as Mrs Gandhi does not believe in bargaining—Ramrao Adik, Maharashtra's finance minister

He (Y. B. Chavan) needs a job. I hope Mrs Gandhi will be kind to him, and not treat him like Mr H. N. Bahuguna—Biju Patnaik, Lok Dal leader

Mr Chavan called it homecoming. I like his expression; it implies the acknowledgement of Mrs Indira Gandhi not only as a leader, but head of the family and in that spirit he is welcomed—A. R. Antulay, Maharashtra CM

I represent those young men in the country whose mothers are not Prime Ministers—Sharad Yadav, Rajiv Gandhi's opponent at Amethi, in *Asli Bharat*

All right thinking people should (today) support Mrs Indira Gandhi whether they are in her party or not—Nandini Satpathy

For God's sake let all be united again. I will step down from leadership to forge such a unity, if necessary—Charan Singh, Lok Dal leader, on the need for reviving the original Janata Party

(The BJP is more) pro-Muslim than pro-India or pro Hindu—Balraj Madhok, Bharatiya Jana Sangh president

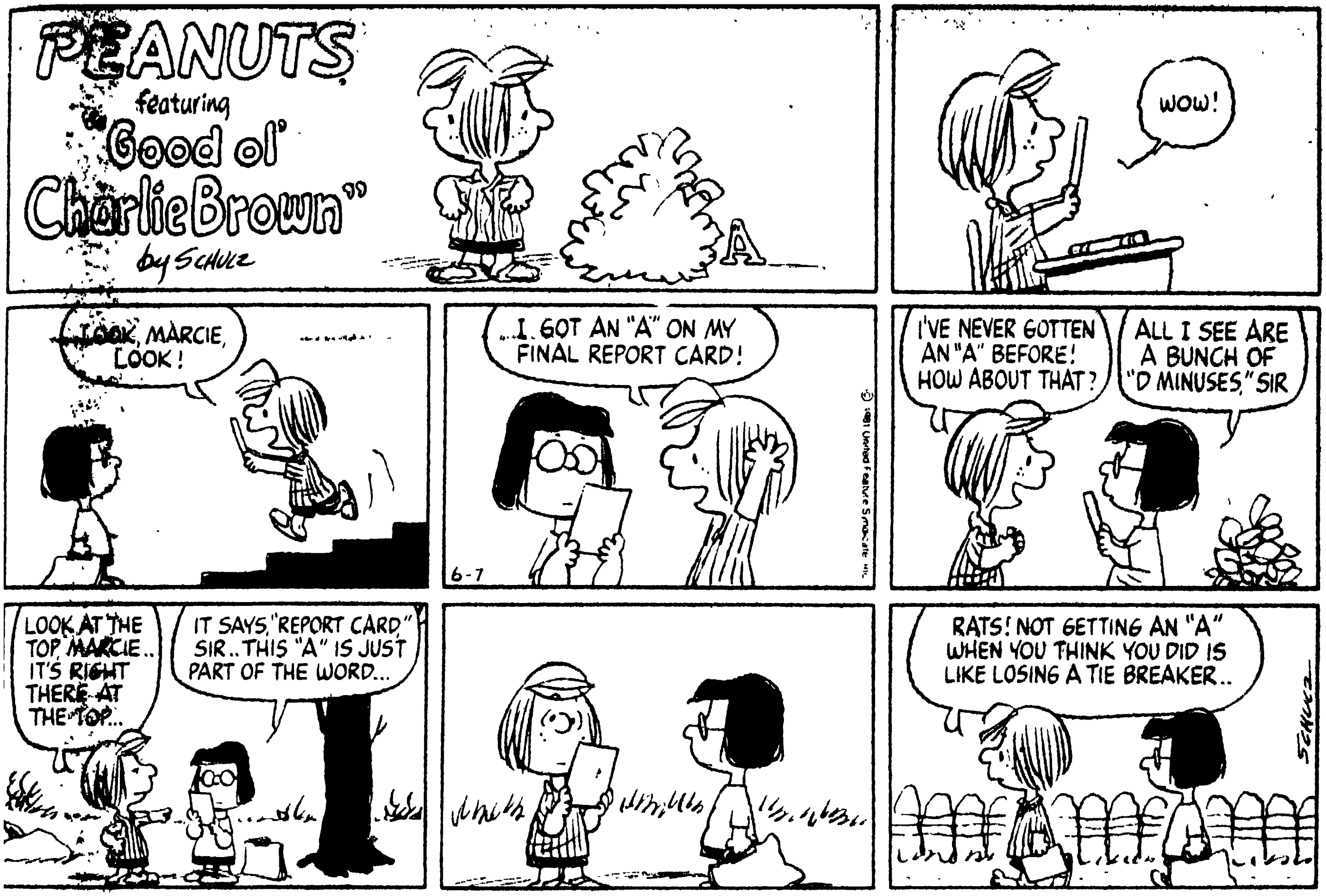
We are not Communists and are not claiming to be Communists; but we are neither capitalists—Mrs Gandhi

Since it is very hot in New Delhi, I would request Mrs Gandhi to come home for a short holiday and in the cool climate of Kashmir, help cool the political atmosphere—Farooq Abdullah, MP and president of the National Conference

I like Americans but not their politics...I did not recognise their right to set themselves as the gendarmes of the world—F. Mitterrand, French President, in *Time*

We did not recognise Mr Karmal because he came sitting on Russian tanks—President Zia-ul-Haq

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik


PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol' Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ
A
WOW!
~~LOOK~~, MARCIE, LOOK!
...I GOT AN "A" ON MY FINAL REPORT CARD!
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6-7
I'VE NEVER GOTTEN AN "A" BEFORE! HOW ABOUT THAT?
ALL I SEE ARE A BUNCH OF "D MINUSES," SIR
LOOK AT THE TOP MARCIE.. IT'S RIGHT THERE AT THE TOP...
IT SAYS, "REPORT CARD," SIR..THIS "A" IS JUST PART OF THE WORD...
RATS! NOT GETTING AN "A" WHEN YOU THINK YOU DID IS LIKE LOSING A TIE BREAKER..
SCHULZ

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PROFESSIONAL VS REAL FRIENDS

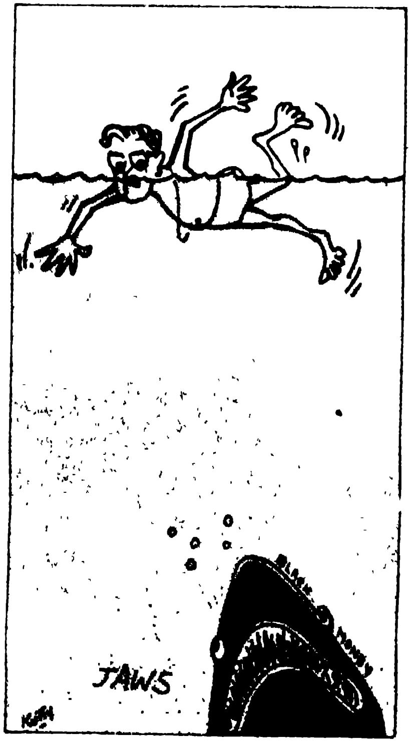
THE 17th death anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru on 27 May was marked by the inauguration of the Congress(I)'s own friendship organisation, the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU). In the past the Congress was content to let the CPI look after Indo-Soviet friendship through the gathering of "like-minded" Congressmen and others that it organised under the aegis of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Society (ISCUS). But the growing rift between the communists and Mrs Gandhi in the past few years has now culminated in the launching of the FSU. Significantly, the pro-Mrs Gandhi communists, Mr S. A. Dange, and his daughter Mrs Roza Deshpande, were both present at the function. Mrs Gandhi had a dig at the "professional friends" who had been considering themselves to be the "sole custodians of friendship with the Soviet Union." The Russians, however, refused to disown the ISCUS. Soviet ambassador Yuli Vorontsov said, "The ISCUS has been doing all these years and continues doing a great job in bringing closer together broad sections of people of our two countries." But the Russian envoy also welcomed the FSU by saying that it was joining the ISCUS in the "noble activity aimed at strengthening" Indo-Soviet ties. Significantly, the USSR embassy's press officers promptly distributed the text of Mr Vorontsov's speech to journalists and requested them to read it right through.

"SMUGGLER" FEROZE GANDHI

THE brain behind the FSU, former union minister K. R. Ganesh, created a flutter at the inaugural function when he referred to the late Feroze Gandhi as a "great smuggler." Mr Ganesh was trying to please Mrs Gandhi by recounting how under the influence of her late husband he became an admirer of the Soviet Union. He recalled how Feroze Gandhi had smuggled into India in 1946 the material for an exhibition on the October Revolution and organised it in Bombay. But most Congress(I) men were unable to appreciate Mr Ganesh's humour and many were later heard saying that it was highly uncharitable of him to have referred to the PM's late husband as a smuggler.

FEUDING SARDARS

ONE can't help but come back to the FSU function again; it was so full of incidents which went unreported in the dailies. Arch-rivals, union home minister Giani Zail Singh and Punjab chief minister Darbara Singh were allotted adjacent seats on the dias. The *gyani* was late and when he found where he had to sit, he started walking away. But the PM's aide, Mr R. K. Dhawan, caught his hand and requested him to sit next to Mr Darbara Singh, who too looked uncomfortable. However, Delhi Congress(I) chief, Har Kishan Lal Bhagat, came to their rescue by dragging a chair and sitting in between the feuding sardars.



FORGETFUL OFFICER

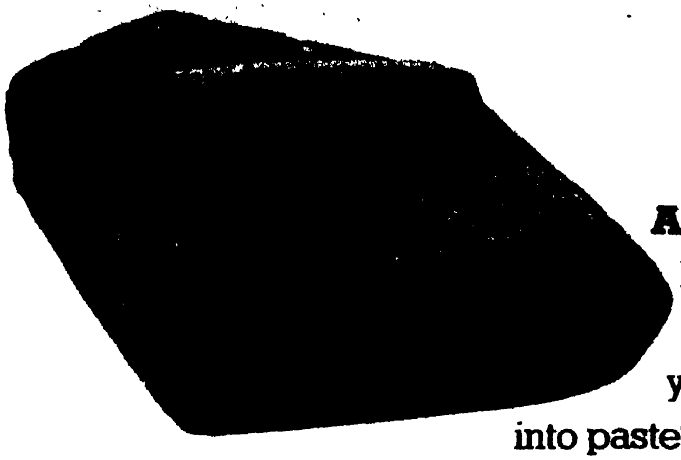
A senior defence ministry official, who thought that he could dupe the government because of a typing error about his date of birth, has been caught out. The officer's birthday falls in February, but while the seniority list of his department was being copied a few years back, instead of "2" for February, "12" for December was erroneously typed in and the error went undetected all these years. On the basis of his real birthday, the officer was due to retire on 28 February this year (the rule being that officers retire on the last date of the month on which their 58th birthday falls). But the officer decided to take advantage of the typing error and continue in office till the end of December. So he sent in his pension papers to the accounts department only in April. But when accounts opened his original file, the error was immediately detected. The department of personnel of the union government ruled that whatever be the typing error, the officer ought to have known his date of birth.

Prosecution against the officer was contemplated for trying to cheat the government, but then someone realised that as the officer had held a very senior post, he had exercised his financial powers regarding a number of crucial decisions and also signed pay bills for his staff in the period when he was illegally in service. All these financial decisions would have become null and void if it was presumed that the officer's functioning in that post was illegal. So, the officer was given a back-dated extension for the period and the financial decisions regularised. The story has two morals for government servants. One, never think that you can cheat the finance department; and two, even if you do so, ensure that you are senior enough so that the government cannot disown you.

IN CONGRESS(I) FOOTSTEPS

IF Mrs Gandhi's party can use government machinery, including the DAVP, for its propaganda, should the Left Front in West Bengal lag behind? In the second week of May, the information department of the West Bengal government invited Delhi's pressmen to the screening of a film on violence in West Bengal on 3 April—the day the Congress(I) organised a *bandh*. Chief minister Jyoti Basu was present at the screening and a state government booklet *In the garb of non-violence* was distributed. The film showed how the Congress(I) demonstrators set fire to buses and how the people suffered during the *bandh*. Any condemnation of violence is welcome. But what is the CPI(M)'s own record regarding *bandh* violence when it was in the opposition? Also, was not the CPI(M) trying to score a propaganda point?

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN



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You can Tingle at home. You can Tingle at a party. You can even Tingle with someone you love!

"How do I Tingle?"

First of all, you need to know a little about your body and its sensitive zones.

There is one part of your body which is the most sensitive of all.

And that is your tongue.

(Tickling yourself behind the knees with a goose feather is a very, very far second.)

It is therefore important for you to concentrate on your tongue when you want to Tingle.

"Now, do this carefully."

Very, very lovingly open up a chilled frosted bottle of the Tingler.

It should open with a pop, but ever so soft a pop. (If you open it fast, you're wasting some Tingle.)

Now, pour the bubbly drink carefully into a chilled glass. Gently does it.

Take a large sip and don't swallow.

Move your tongue around, and you'll discover the Tingle at that moment.

Thousands of tiny bubbles will explode against your palate.

"Whew! Just telling you about it makes me Tingle!"

Follow the procedure, mouthful after mouthful. Take your time. Don't hurry.

You now know the secret of Tingling.

But a word of advice here. Don't forget to concentrate on what your tongue feels.

Otherwise you won't taste the crisp, clean flavour of the Tingler.

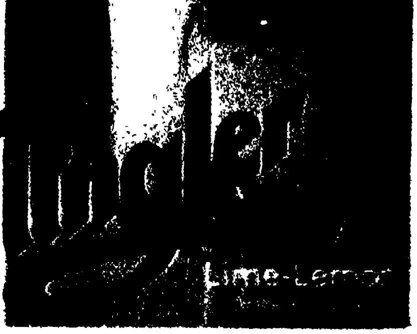
"Don't give up!"

After some practice you will learn how to make the Tingle spread to other parts of your body.

Right now I can make the Tingle reach the base of my spine.

Now I'm practicing to make the Tingle reach the back of my knees.

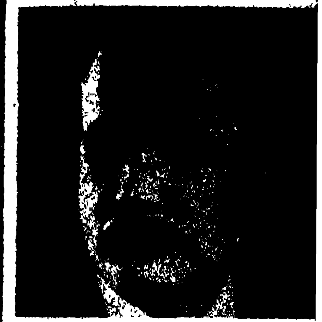
Then I can do without that silly goose feather.

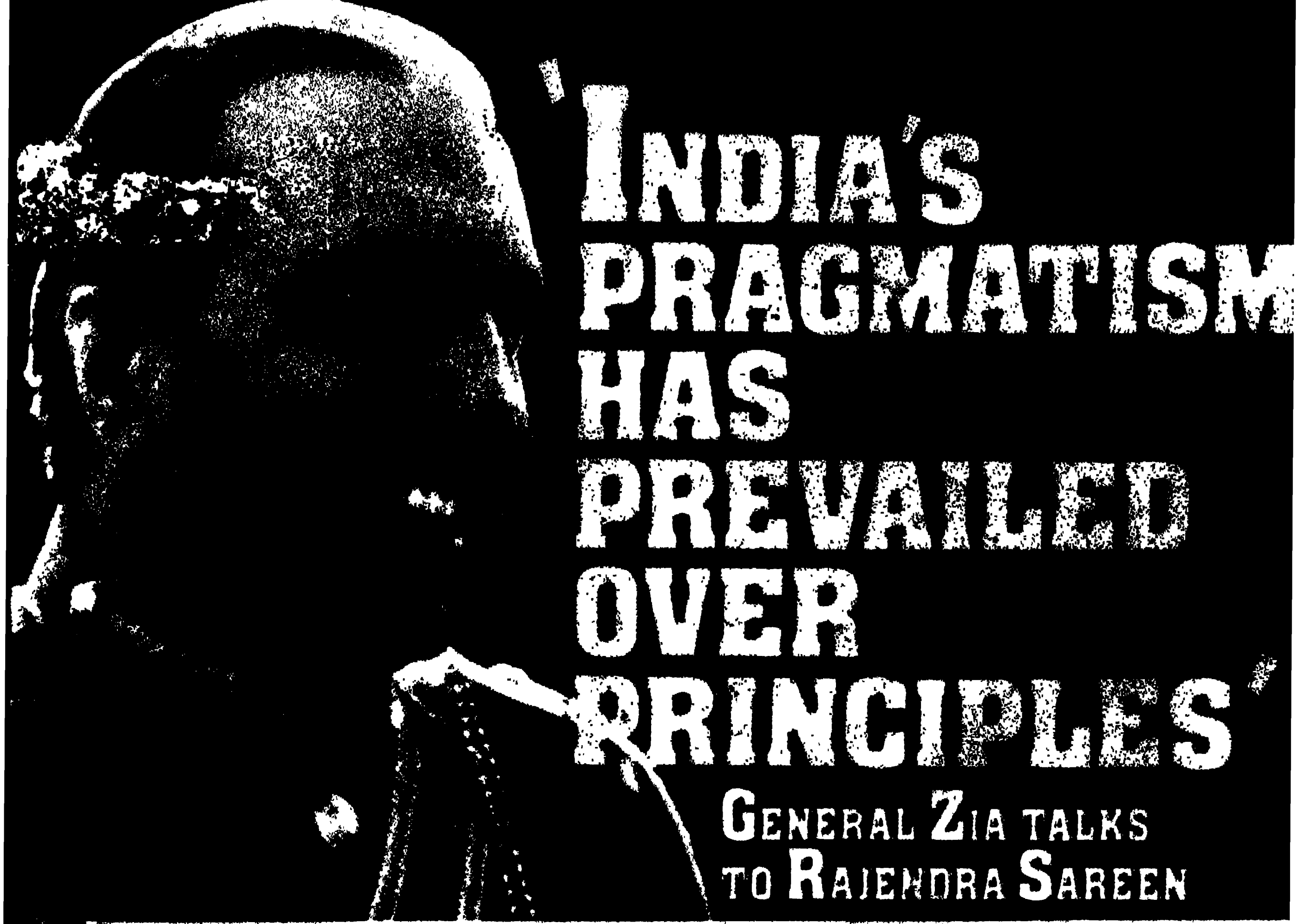


Get the taste that tingles!

SUNDAY

IQBAL'S SHIKWA





'INDIA'S PRAGMATISM HAS PREVAILED OVER PRINCIPLES'

GENERAL ZIA TALKS TO RAJENDRA SAREEN

'Mrs Gandhi can give e the keys and sleep"

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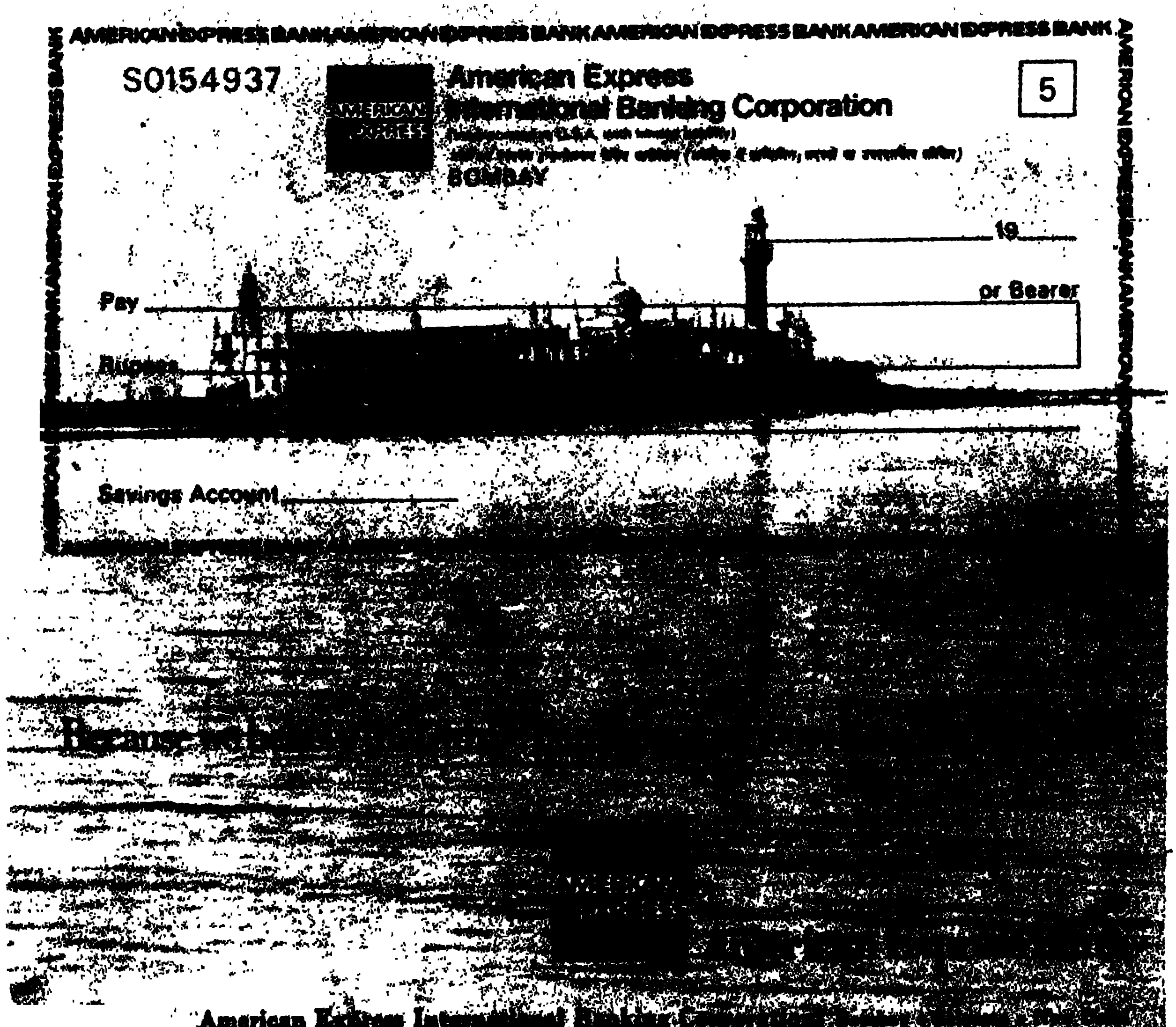

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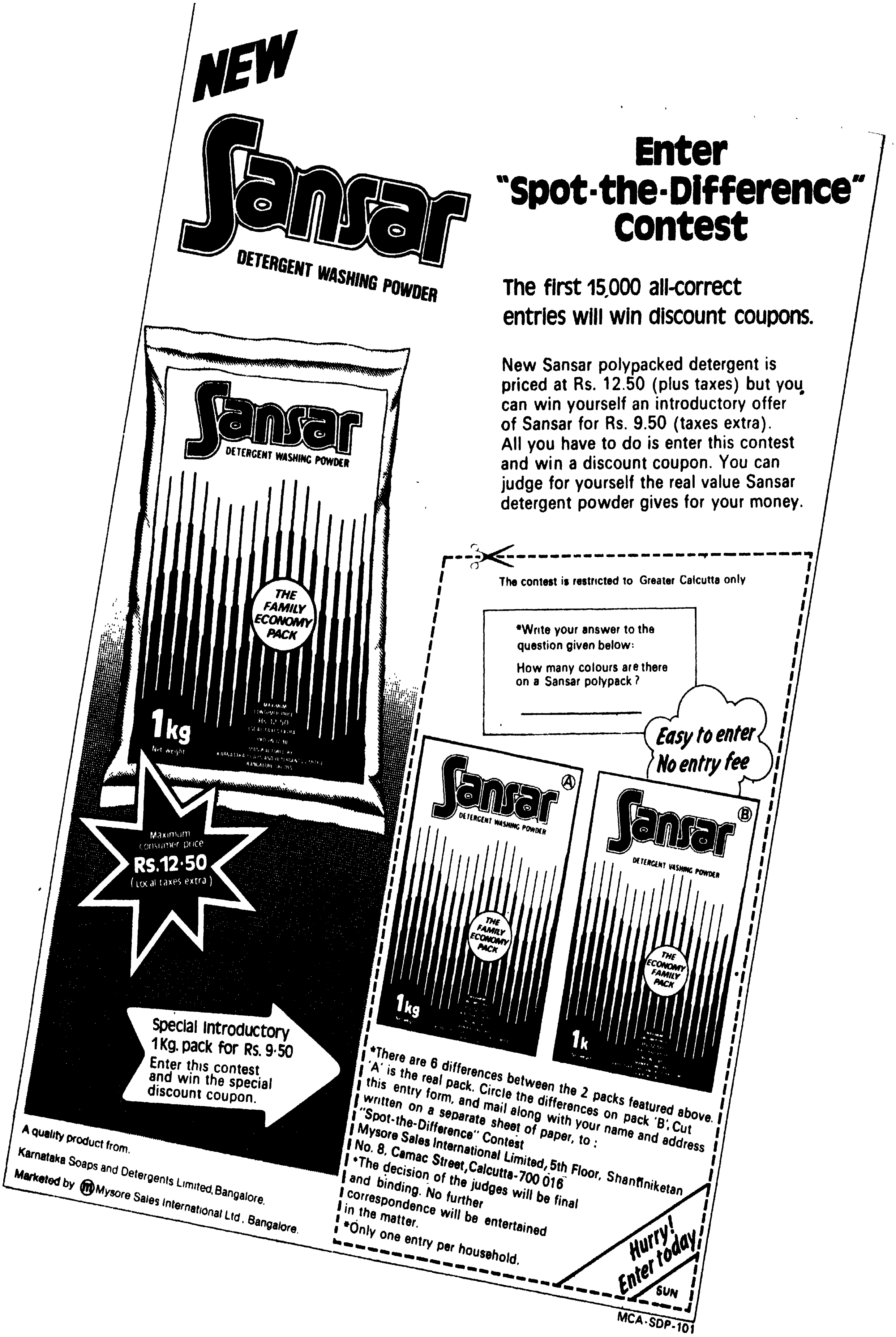
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SUNDAY

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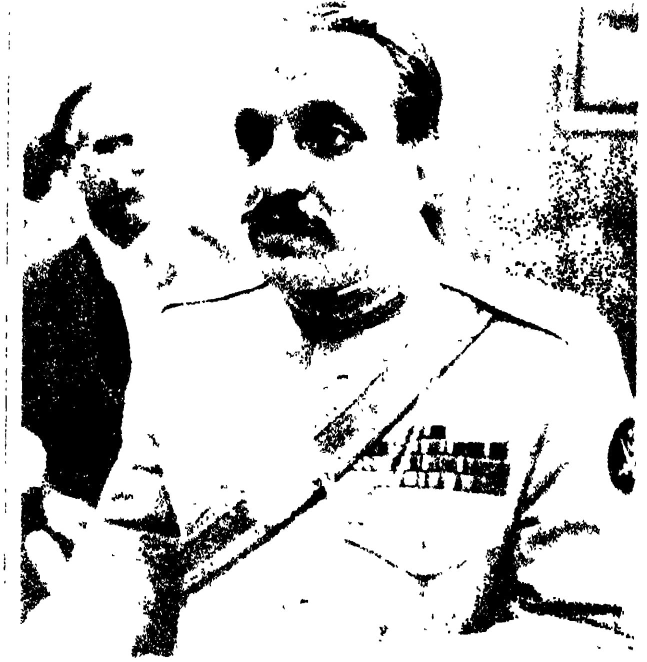

How does Pakistan view Chinese moves to normalise relations with India? Does Pakistan consider itself a part of West Asia or South Asia? Will Pakistan be able to remain non-aligned after accepting substantial US military aid? Is it not time to look beyond the Simla agreement? What can be done to remove the emotional hang-ups that vitiate Indo-Pak relations? In a major, exclusive interview in Islamabad, Rajendra Sareen asks Gen Zia-ul Haq these and other detailed questions **Page 10**

The *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i-Shikwa*, the two most famous poems of Iqbal, have been splendidly translated by Khushwant Singh We reproduce the *Shikwa* in English **Page 18**

Gundu Rao, Karnataka chief minister, told Arun Shourie everything he wanted to know about who is really who in Congress(I) politics, all in the course of a sumptuous lunch **Page 22**

Would Major General Manzoor have attempted the coup to overthrow Gen Zia without promise of support from a powerful ally? Ian Jack reports in an exclusive despatch from Dacca that there *was* a third man who had promised support to Manzoor but later betrayed him **Page 24**

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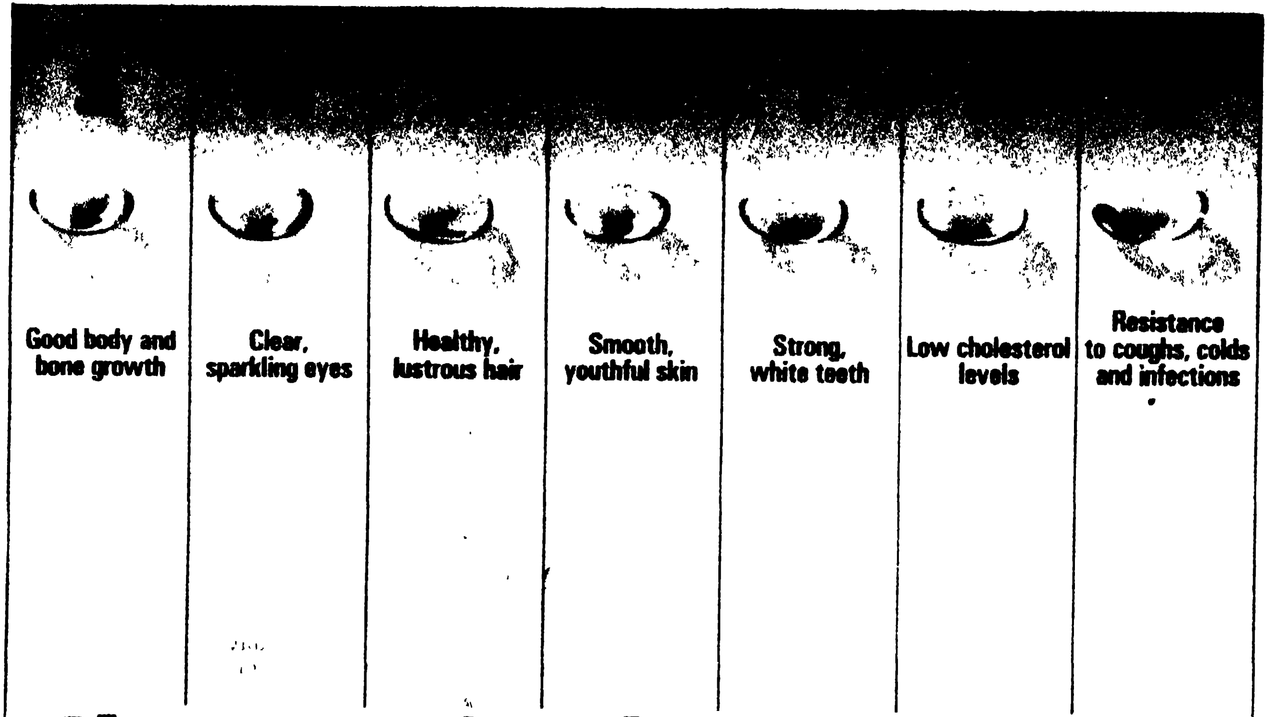

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CHAITRA-SS-1

Does police verification make sense today?

EXCLUSIVE
EXCLUSIVE
EXCLUSIVE

BY KULDIP NAYAR

Police verification is a colonial practice that is as scrupulously followed now as it was when the British ruled the country. What it means is that the police check your "character and antecedents" to find out whether you are a "safe person." Applications for passport, identity card and even for a loan from banks require police verification. But the closest scrutiny is undertaken in recruitment. A person may obtain the highest marks in a competitive examination but if the police do not "clear" him, he is not offered the post.

This has become a matter of controversy between the centre and the non-Congress(I) ruled states. The point at issue is not so much the verification as the area it should cover. During the British days, children belonging to the families of Congressmen and revolutionaries were barred entry into government service because they had associations with "subversive elements." There are examples of brilliant boys not making the Indian Civil Service or the Indian Police because of their family connections Since independence, communists and radicals have become "subversive elements" Things have been taken to such extremes that in some instances the Prime Minister has had to intervene to over-rule the result of the police verification.

The communists-run states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura have been arguing that a person, otherwise qualified, should not be rejected because he or his family possesses communist views. Since verification is done by the local police, these states have been clearing candidates who in the central government's eyes have associations with "subversive elements."

New Delhi has now begun using its own Intelligence Bureau—each state has an IB establishment—to verify candidates for central services after the non-Congress(I) ruled states have checked them. Tamil Nadu and Jammu and Kashmir have also been added to the list of states requiring "special police verifications by the IB."

The communist-run states have taken up the issue with the home ministry. Its reply is: "The character and antecedents of such persons are got verified on the basis of the information supplied by the applicant in a prescribed form through district authorities or, where the government feels that more information would be required to determine the suitability of the persons to the satisfaction of the government. It is open to the government to obtain further material or information from any of its available agencies as it may consider fit."

The home ministry has not stopped at that. It has issued identical instructions to all central government appointing authorities. The result is that central government officers in non-Congress(I) ruled states depend on the IB for police verification. The situation is quite comical at times because the IB, having a limited staff in the states, harnesses the services of the local police for verification

To prove that it is not gunning for any particular political group, the home ministry has issued several instructions on verification. One instruction says: "Persons actively engaged in subversive activities, including members of organisations the avowed object of which is to change the existing order of society by violent means, should be considered unfit for appointment."

However, when verification takes place, the police regard only members of leftist organisations as "subversive elements." No communal organisation appears to be on the banned list. And it may sound strange but on one point where the government of India and the non-Congress(I) ruled states converge is in their attitude towards the Naxalites. They are considered the most dangerous and the central and state police organisations straightaway cross out the names of those candidates who have had even a remote association with the Naxalites.

For quite different reasons, I had a taste of police verification the other day. A meek looking policeman from the CID knocked at my door and announced that he wanted to check my antecedents. Before I could ask why, he said that verification was required because I had applied for press accreditation to the government of India. I told him that the Press Information Bureau, where I had submitted my application, knew about my antecedents. He remained unmoved and inquired if there was any suit pending against me. "You know, we have to check these things because Dharam Teja had once run away from the country."

I again pursued the subject and said that the government had checked my antecedents when I had applied for my passport. He did not reply to that and continued with his inquiries: "What is free-lancing?" "Where are you employed?" "How long have you lived in this house?"

Sensing my exasperation, he said politely. "I am doing my duty and I am in a hurry because they rang up last night for a report by noon today They never give you time." I still did not give up and remarked that the whole thing was archaic and silly. He did not pay any attention to what I said and went on filling in the columns of the verification form. But he was startled when he overheard our servant reporting to my wife that he had brought back the ration card since there was no sugar available at present.

"Why didn't you tell me that you had a ration card?" he said. There were no further queries. He quietly noted the card number and left. I have still not figured out what police verification has to do with the ration card unless it is issued after checking the "character and antecedents" of an applicant.

Splendid goodbye

The rare flower (17 May) was a fitting tribute to a great artiste. Reading Anil Saari's account of Nargis' life I was moved to tears May her soul rest in peace
M M. Shahul Hameed, Rajaghiri (Tamil Nadu)

I thank SUNDAY for bidding such a splendid goodbye to Nargis.
Tish Kumar Malhotra, Delhi

Anil Saari's was the most complete tribute to Nargis
V S. Pochemcharla, Hyderabad

At 20, I belong to that unfortunate generation which never knew Nargis as the phenomenal screen star that she once was; yet I found Anil Saari's cover story superb. The 17 May issue of SUNDAY was not just another issue. It was an album on Nargis worth preserving.
Sandeep L. Sharma, Bombay

After Uttam Kumar another legend has passed away.
Samir Som, Howrah

Your cover with Nargis' photograph is certainly the cover of the year.
Santosh Satpathy, Patnagarh (Orissa)

Congratulations for the marvellous Nargis cover.
R S. L. Murty, Adilabad

Yours was the only magazine to pay such a rich tribute to Nargis; this indicates that SUNDAY cherishes all the noble values of the late actress.
N. Seshadri, Tiruchirapalli

I was deeply moved by Nargis' speech, *'I am a Hindusthani first.'*
Aruna Kumar Mohapatra, Puri

Your cover story was excellent. Really, the love between Nargis and Sunil Dutt was unparalleled; the last moments of the actress' life turned out to be the climax of a great love story.
Uttam Kumar Dubey, Patna

More than anything else, she was humble; that is why Nargis is immortal.
Sampa Roy, Bokaro

'Mother India' is dead and we have lost in her a great soul, talented artiste and dedicated social worker.
Chowdhary Nisar Ahmed, Ambur (Tamil Nadu)

I realised the worth of SUNDAY after reading the cover story on Nargis; even our film magazines failed to pay due respect to the departed soul.
R. V. Badri, Thane

Nargis has left behind an unlimited area of good deeds and love for us.
Pijush Kanti Chandra, Kharagpur

The values which Nargis stood for will never be forgotten.
Alok Kumar Bhusan, Udaipur (Tripura)

Though the actress, social worker, noble mother and dedicated wife has been laid to rest, she will forever remain in our memory.
Supriyo Banerjee, Puri

I appeal to the members of the Dutt family to carry on the good work which Nargis had done for the poor and handicapped.
Sarat Chandra Dash, Bhubaneswar

On behalf of · Nargis' fans I thank you for the cover story.
Pinku Bhattacharjee, Calcutta

Nargis has set a great example for every Indian woman to follow.
Saroj Kumar Das, Cuttack

Mr Sunil Dutt should find comfort in the fact that his wife has finally been relieved of acute physical pain.
M. Nasim Ansari, Howrah

The death of Nargis is an irreparable loss to the country.
Manik Chandra Chakravertty, Katihar

Whatever may be said about Nargis is less; and within this limitation, your cover story was by far the best.
Abdul Aziz, Hyderabad

Unlike other Hindusthani wives, Nargis had not adopted her husband's religion; this is clear from her wish to be buried and not cremated after death. So how could she claim to be "a Hindusthani first?"
Rabindra Dutta, Tinsukia

It is a pity that the cover story did not include a single photograph of Nargis in *Mother India* —the film which was not only monumental in her career but also brought her very close to Sunil Dutt
Bidhan Chandra, Bokaro

A number of Nargis' outstanding films like *Jogan*, *Babul* and *Hulchal* did not find mention in your cover story
Rajinder Singh, New Delhi

How could Nargis criticise Ray for projecting the miseries and hardships of poverty in his films when she herself was dedicated to the cause of the poor?
Niranjan Parhi, Bharak (Orissa)

I still cannot understand what prompted such an accomplished screen personality like Nargis to criticise Satyajit Ray
Kumar Raj, Solan

While congratulating you for the cover story on Nargis, I would like to point out a small error: Nargis used to go regularly to Gurudev Siddhapeeth (I myself had seen her there on a number of occasions) and not Muktananda Ashram in Vageshwari as stated by Anil Saari Gurudev Siddhapeeth is a branch of Swami Muktananda Paramahansa in Ganeshpuri
R N. Lakhotia, Calcutta

I wonder why so many precious pages of SUNDAY were wasted on Nargis.
F. N. Ashra, Calcutta

More of the bull

It seems that the main purpose of Subramaniam Swamy's *Bull in the China shop* (10 May) was to tarnish Atal Behari Vajpayee's image.
A. Jayathilak, Trivandrum

Though it was difficult to gauge how much of Dr Swamy's article was fact and how much fiction, it did sustain interest.
A. R. Ramanarayanan, Rourkela

Reading Dr Swamy's article one wonders whether he is the Chinese ambassador in India.
C. V. Prasad, Rajamundry

I wish Dr Swamy had concentrated on the objective analysis of Sino-Indian relations instead of political mudslinging.
Dinesh Singh, Calcutta

It is high time Dr Swamy learnt to be sweet and gentle; it was highly indecent of him to ridicule Mrs Mrinal Gore.
B. Ramachandra, Bhubaneswar

Dr Swamy should remember that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones at others
K. Leela, Kanpur

I wonder if Dr Swamy's proposal to ask China for the Kailash-Mansarovar portion of Tibet in return for parts of Aksai Chin comes from his sympathy with the Dalai Lama's cause, or is it merely the simplest way to win over the Chinese?
C. C. Rao, Vijayavada

Does Dr Swamy really expect us to believe that he was the "natural choice" to visit China simply because he speaks Chinese and has written on the economy of China?
Syed Shafi Ahmed, Davangere (Karnataka)

Dr Swamy has the reputation of saying startling things at odd times that either shock or amuse people. However, he is not hollow; he is always full of ideas and educated enough to be taken seriously.
K. Govind, Kuttipuram

Shoddy raid

Srinagar's income tax raids: High and low drama (17 May) clearly showed that the raids were badly planned. To begin with, there was no need to keep the taxmen in the dark about their destination and the task ahead; they should have been properly briefed. CRPF personnel in mufti should have been deployed much earlier in the areas to be raided. And in a city where most houses do not have numbers on their doors, road maps with strategic places marked were essential for the taxmen; it is hardly surprising that the wrong premises were raided.
N. Narayan, Madras

I personally feel that planning was meticulous till the stage when the income tax party reached Srinagar. Thereafter, a guide who knew the exact location of the places to be raided should have escorted the taxmen. At the same time, adequate measures should have been taken against any political interference.
S. K. Narula, Korba (Madhya Pradesh)

Terror from the right

While thanking Subir Roy for *The murderous bombs of Assam* (29 April), I blame all the rightist political parties for promoting communalism and encouraging violence in order to destroy the left movement in Assam.
Prateep Sen Gupta, Digboi

The killing of commissioner E. S. Parthasarathi of Upper Assam shows that the government cannot provide security to even its own officials while they are discharging their duties
M Shoib Siddiqui, Lucknow

Not many in Assam who participated in the peaceful picketing last year will agree with Tooshar Pandit's emotional account of the *Brutal end to an illustrious career*. It was under the very same comissioner E. S. Parthasarathi's orders that the custodians of law killed many innocent agitators.
K Ahmed, Jorhat

Wrong example

Pakistan's brave Urdu poets (10 May) was interesting. But I disagree with Mehru Jaffer's contention that Ibne Insha's *Inshaji ab kooch karo* is an example of fearlessness. As far as I know, this verse was written in London during Insha's self-exile and conveys his yearning for his homeland and disillusionment with the west.
Anil Jauhri, Madras

Save the commission

Minorities Commission: twice orphaned? (29 March) shows how helpless the minorities commission is. The minorities have continued to suffer in spite of the fact that a commission was set up to look into their legitimate grievances. Justice Ansari miserably failed during his tenure. Will the former Chief Justice Mr M. H. Beg be able to safeguard their interests? Will he be able to prove that the commission is not meant to ensure minority political support and votes for a particular party, as is widely believed?
Neyaz Ahmed Quraishi, Giridih

Manipur not Nagaland

Your shoulder headline for *PLA guns keep booming* (3 May) should have been Manipur, not Nagaland. The PLA was formed in Manipur.
T. Guite, Calcutta

Shocking omission

I was shocked to find that the map on page 17, along with *India: Mafia's latest target* (3 May) shows Azad Kashmir, the part of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan, as an area outside India. I had noticed the omission in some Chinese and US maps of the Indian subcontinent, but this is the first time that I have seen it in an Indian magazine.
Soumyabrata Guhathakurta, Baripada

Sheer parochialism

Reading the cover story, *Sikhs: the third nation?* (3 May), we are reminded of Pandit Nehru's disastrous mistake in dividing a few states on the linguistic basis. This has resulted in parochialism and anti-nationalist tendencies.
W. P. Suresh Paul, Bangalore

The Sikh leaders are trying to serve their own ends; before it becomes a formidable issue, the government should suppress the *Des Khalsa* movement.
Arvinder Singh Walia, Calcutta

In his capacity as home minister and a Sikh, it is Giani Zail Singh's duty to find an amicable solution to the Khalistan issue, keeping both his country's and community's interests in mind.
A K. Nayak, Bhubaneswar

Illustration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

Contrary to allegations that the government does not want the Sikhs to assert their identity on the national scene, Sikhs have always figured prominently in sports, politics and on the battlefield. So much so that the average foreigner's impression of a typical Indian is the bearded man with a turban on his head.
Ashok Dutta, Shillong

Rare compliment

[illegible] by the [illegible] black, [illegible] Beat, [illegible] to know that [illegible] talented, ori- [illegible] person on [illegible] such indepth [illegible]
[illegible] Calcutta

Munsi defends

Ajai Mishra claims that *Dhanbad's latest 'Guru'* (10 May) Tara Pad Singh had been introduced to the then energy minister K. C. Pant by me. I would like to point out that this is absolutely untrue, false, fabricated and motivated. I never knew any Tara Pad Singh of Dhanbad nor had I introduced any such person to Mr K. C. Pant.

During the days of my Youth Congress activities a number of young people came into contact with me in Delhi. I never encouraged or supported any anti-social elements. The mention of my name in connection with the notorious Tara Pad Singh comes as a complete surprise.
Priya Ranjan Das Munsi, Calcutta

Home of English?

Barun Sengupta's observation that fluency in English is "still considered an essential requirement of the home minister of India" (*Power and Politics*, 10 May) is shocking. If after 34 years of independence this is the state of affairs then all I can say is that *yehi mehsoos hota hai ki paraye ghar mein rahte hain* (I get the feeling that I am living in a stranger's house).
Kalaivanan, Dindigul

Uncertain future

Political forecasts (*Sunday week*) are replete with such words like 'may,' 'might' and 'if.' Can't the great divine science of astrology provide crystal-clear and more definite predictions?
V. L. Narayana, Howrah

Twice frustrated

I was amused to read Shaikh Altaf Hossain's baseless allegation against the selection procedure for admission to the MBA course in Aligarh Muslim University (*Opinion*, 3 May) That Mr Hossain appeared twice for the MBA admission test and failed to qualify is neither an indication of merit being "the last criterion for selection" nor of admissions being "based on names and nominations " It is well known that many candidates appear repeatedly for the IAS and other competitive examinations and yet fail to qualify Are each of these exams unfair? Mr Hossain's allegation only reflects his frustration after failing the entrance test twice in succession.
Zahid Hasan, AMU, Aligarh

Last letter

According to reports, the Chinese foreign minister is to visit India in the last week of June. I wonder whom India will "teach a lesson" this time.
Sunny Sebastian, New Delhi

Rs 50 for the last letter

'INDIA'S PRAGMATISM HAS PREVAILED OVER PRINCIPLES'

GENERAL ZIA TALKS TO RAJENDRA SAREEN

There are a number of unusual features of this interview, but first let me explain how it came about. It was conceived in the course of a discussion with the ambassador of Pakistan in India, Mr Abdul Sattar, whose exertions in the cause of creating good relations between the two countries are well known. At a social function organized by Mr Chandra Shekhar to celebrate the wedding of the daughter of Mr S. Shahabuddin, MP, on 15 April Mr Sattar asked me what could be done to ensure that some lasting and worthwhile results ensue from the forthcoming visit of the Indian foreign minister to Pakistan. I expressed the view that before anything worthwhile could emerge between the two countries, there would have to be an effort to explore the basics of the relationship to determine the problems and attitudes which foul up the atmosphere so that it becomes impossible to have an objective and straight look at the issues involved. I suggested that if the President of Pakistan would agree to answer questions dealing with the basics, then perhaps the stage could be set for some sort of breakthrough. Ambassador Sattar sent a telegram to Islamabad and pursued the idea with cabled reminders. After five weeks a reply came on 20 May: YES. I left on the 23rd, having submitted the day before a set of questions which, according to my understanding, deal with the gamut of factors crucial to the relationship between India and Pakistan.

The logic behind these questions is that whether it is today or a year from now or five years, whether after another conflict or without it, whenever the two countries do decide to settle their differences to set themselves on the course of mutual friendship, sensitive matters will have to be faced in all their implications and answers found.

The understanding was that the interview would take place between the 23rd and 26th, and that is the basis on which all arrangements had been made. On reaching Islamabad I found that the director general of external publicity, Mr Iqbal Butt, was dismayed over the nature of questions. However, a discussion with Major General Mujibur Rehman, secretary to the ministry of information, Pakistan government, concluded on a cordial note, both of us agreeing that in view of the nature of questions these would require considered replies of the Pakistan government speaking through the President of the country. I had no desire to score debating points over the issues which to my thinking are far too important to be subjected to that kind of treatment.

Anyway, the arrangement agreed upon was that the replies would be prepared and given in advance and thereafter I would be given an opportunity to seek clarifications through supplementaries when I met the President formally for the interview. The interview took place on 30 May, but contrary to the earlier understanding I was not given an advance copy of the replies. Repeated requests earlier in the day merely elicited a terse reply from Mr Butt that my request had been noted.

On arriving to meet the President, I was told that I would not be allowed to take in my cassette recorder. I was also told that I could not take any notes of my conversation with the President.

General Zia started with a statement that he and his colleagues in the Pakistan government held Mrs Gandhi in high esteem. The next was that Pakistan was not in competition with India and was not seeking to attain parity with its bigger neighbour. Third, that Pakistan, having come into existence as a result of an agreed settlement between the then British government of India, the hindus and the muslims of the subcontinent, was not born out of conflict and should be allowed to survive in amity. Fourth, that Pakistanis find it very difficult to understand and comprehend what he called the "war hysteria" in India. Fifth, that it was not fair on India's part to try to prevent Pakistan from seeking help from friendly countries for modernising and updating the military equipment of its armed forces because for so many years Pakistan had been subjected to discriminatory treatment by the USA.

Earlier, I had the privilege to have extensive discussions with foreign minister Agha Shahi; secretary general of the ministry of foreign affairs of Pakistan, Mr S. Shahnawaz; and Maj. Gen. Mujibur Rehman, information secretary of Pakistan. I must record my grateful thanks to all these three, as also to Mr Mujahid Hussain, the director general of the South Asian desk in the Pakistan foreign office, who was extremely helpful and forthcoming in discussing matters of importance for our two countries.

Now for the unusual features of this interview:

The President chose to make his observations extempore without

Mrs Gandhi and Gen. Zia in Salisbury

letting me have a look at the answers prepared after careful consideration. The replies were handed over to me only after the meeting had come to an end, and I was on the way out, so that I could seek no clarifications on any aspect requiring further elucidation.

- The General spoke of "war hysteria" in India and specially drew attention to Mrs Gandhi's warning that war clouds were hovering over the South Asian horizon. He would not take any questions regarding the state of "war psychosis" in Pakistan, as a result of which there is widespread belief in Pakistan that she may be subjected to aggression by India.
- While one hears so much about the evil designs that India is supposed to have on Pakistan's continuance as a sovereign nation state, there is practically no interest in allowing an exploration of this area with a view to evolving acceptable assurances from India which might satisfy Pakistan on this score.
- While Gen. Zia spoke at some length on the need for India, as the elder of the two countries, to take the initiative in reassuring Pakistan, he would not engage in a discussion of this matter to determine what kind of policy formulation might be evolved by India to reassure Pakistan on this account.

I may mention by way of explanation that when I discussed this matter with Mr S. Shahnawaz a few days earlier, I had enquired from him whether a declaration by the Parliament of India reaffirming this country's acceptance of Pakistan, and proclaiming goodwill and friendship towards its sovereign neighbour, would be welcome. His instant reaction was that it might, perhaps, help. But when the matter was subsequently discussed with foreign minister Agha Shahi, he showed no interest in setting out the form of assurances which would satisfy Pakistan in relation to India's commitment to the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Pakistan. That was rather a surprise to me, because I know that a major negative input in Indo-Pakistan affairs is that there is a widespread belief in Pakistan that India is out to hurt Pakistan.

You talk to anybody in Pakistan and you come across the question: 'Why does not India let Pakistan be? After all, we can be good friends, we are natural allies, we are natural friends closely associated with each other, we are close neighbours, we have so much to share in common.'

So, it was the most natural thing for me to try to explore the specifics in this regard. But there was not only no specific answer to my questions, the foreign minister of Pakistan showed no interest at all.

Gen Zia-ul Haq's answers to my questions are there, and I would like the readers to form their own opinion. But my own feeling is that he prefers not to answer some of the more substantial questions on relations between the two countries because there is a definite reluctance on his part to face the implications of what is involved in these issues. It is one thing to take a position and make generalized statements expressing goodwill; it is quite another to evolve an acceptable and viable basis after carefully working out the nuts and bolts of a policy framework capable of reassuring the two countries of each other's bona fides.

My overall impression is that while there is a genuine desire for peace and friendship between the peoples of India and Pakistan, any basic reorientation on this issue perhaps carries certain political implications which the present government of Pakistan does not consider desirable, or able to undertake.

General Zia-ul Haq has persuaded himself, and so have many others in Pakistan not belonging to the ruling military junta, that if only Mr Morarji Desai had been the Prime Minister perhaps things would be different. Now this is a subjective belief about which one cannot argue. But if one leaves it at that, the logic of it takes us to the point where, unless Mrs Gandhi orders immediate polls and the people of India repose their faith in Mr Morarji Desai (a prospect so dubious that it can be straightaway written off) the two countries must move on a collision course. When Gen.Zia staged his coup and came to power after ousting the constitutional government of the day, his major anxiety was that neighbouring countries should not add to his problems. This was valid not only in relation to India but also the Arab countries. Mr Bhutto had built up a very close relation with the Shah of Iran, the President of the UAE and some others like Col.Gaddafi and the PLO chief, Mr Yasser Arafat.

Since then there has been a state of permanent domestic confrontation in Pakistan. The trial of Mr Bhutto and his execution subjected the ruling military junta to considerable pressure within their own country. The stance of strict neutrality, and the conscious decision by Mr Desai to turn a blind eye to all that was happening in Pakistan reassured the General and *saved him a lot of bother. There are many people in Pakistan who believe that the Janata government perhaps provided Gen.Zia with the vital marginal sustenance when the latter was beset by the most serious challenge of his life. In any case, Mr Desai's attitude certainly came as a great help to General Zia.*

After Bhutto's execution, the easy relationship between the Janata government and the General's junta perhaps would have inevitably come under strain, but this can at best remain a speculation. Within a few months of Bhutto's execution, the Janata government was ousted and Mr Charan Singh assumed power. No major development took place in the sphere of India's relations with Pakistan during this period.

The intervention of the Russian troops in Afghanistan and the reelection of Mrs Gandhi almost coincided: the two developments came within days of each other. Mrs Gandhi had already taken a very critical position on the annihilation of the democratic and political structure in Pakistan. The General was, in any case, agitated about Mrs Gandhi's return to power: her views on the coup which brought him to power were enough to assure that.

Gen.Zia's refusal to be reassured by Mrs Gandhi, therefore, stems in good measure from the fact that she is not prepared to go out of the way to commit India to Gen. Zia's cause in terms of his domestic problems.

The situation in Afghanistan has given the General and his government a lot of relief. The economic squeeze which the Americans had been applying on Pakistan has been relaxed; on the contrary, the opposite is now underway. The General has, over a period, been able to get the better of the whole lot of political leaders in the country, and he is not under any great strain now domestically. It is perhaps as well, therefore, for the General to play up Mrs Gandhi as a hostile factor on the Pakistan horizon; otherwise domestic problems may trigger off impulses and forces which the General would not find very comfortable.

Be that as it may, I was left totally aghast by the utter lack of interest in the kind of assurances India should come forward with, to establish beyond doubt to the people of Pakistan that it has no hostile intention, or any desire to subject them to pressure, or interfere with their national sovereignty, or to do anything to impair their national security. I wonder if this does not stem from the fact that the prevalent uncertainty on this issue perhaps comes very handy to the present government.

So, what should India do? Should it play along with the General? My own feeling is that we must not. We should, on our own, make it clear beyond doubt that we stand committed to the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Pakistan. Whatever problems exist between the two countries are problems between two sovereign nations, and will have to be resolved within the framework of mutual negotiations and without recourse to force, as provided in the Simla agreement.

The one part of the General's answers in the accompanying interview that I should strongly urge Mrs Gandhi to take seriously is the tongue-in-cheek observation that "Mrs Gandhi must be left alone to create her own image in Pakistan by the quality of her statements."

Q: *What do you feel about the security environment in South-West Asia and the Gulf region, with particular reference to the rivalry among the super powers?*

A: One should distinguish between events that provoke super power rivalry, and those that are its product. Roughly speaking, the problem in South-West Asia, by which I suppose you mean Afghanistan, would belong in the first category, while that in the Gulf region would fall in the second category. It is so because, apart from its strategic importance, the Gulf is the main source of energy for the world and no one super power would like exclusive access to it by the other super power. It is this inherent rivalry which brings the two super powers in confrontation in this region. Afghanistan is not such a source of energy though its strategic value, like that of Pakistan, has a larger sweep than merely providing a route for the oil-producing Gulf region.

The Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan is a strategic move of far-reaching consequences inviting an immediate response from the other super power. The intrusion of Soviet power into Afghanistan and the exit of United States' influence from Iran following the overthrow of the Shah have given a double strategic advantage to the Soviet Union. The Iran-Iraq conflict brings the rivalry between the super powers into sharper focus. Further west this rivalry is reflected in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Lebanese crisis which is its product. As in the case of the Israeli occupation of the lands of the Arabs, so in the case of the presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, we have, as an Islamic and non-aligned country, taken our position on the basis of fundamental principles.

To confine myself to our immediate neighbourhood, we are seeking a negotiated settlement of the Afghanistan crisis which would ensure the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the creation of conditions for the safe and honourable return of the refugees to their homeland, the maintenance of the independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan, and the restoration of the Afghans' right to choose a government of their liking.

Pakistan views China's interest in normalising its relations with India as a positive move in harmony with Pakistan's own objectives in the region.

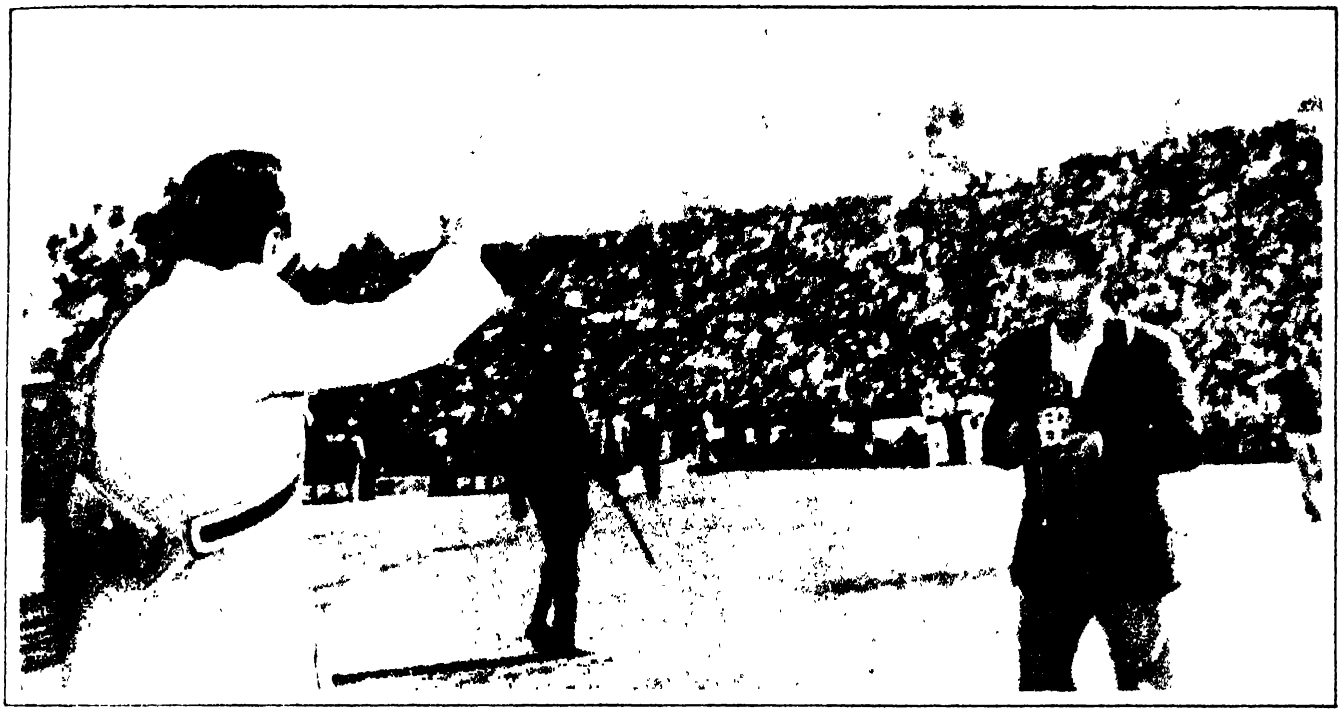
Similarly, as a member of the Islamic Peace Committee, we are exerting ourself to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Iran-Iraq conflict which is proving so ruinous to the two countries with which we have brotherly relations and whose losses we consider as our losses.

The qualitative change in the security environment of our region and in particular, of Pakistan, was expected by us to be seen by India as a development of common concern opening new opportunities for closer understanding and cooperation. These expectations have not been fulfilled.

Q: *The Chinese Prime Minister is due to visit Islamabad for talks with Your Excellency. He will also be visiting Nepal. Later on, the Chinese foreign minister is scheduled to visit New Delhi. A few weeks back, Mr Deng Xiaoping spoke of China's interest in building up good neighbourly relations between the countries of South Asia. Pakistan has traditionally felt secure in her relations with China. How does Pakistan view China's interest in normalising its relations with India, and its new emphasis on supporting good relations among the countries of South Asia?*

A: We are greatly looking forward to the visit of His Excellency Zhao Ziyang who is the Prime Minister of a country with which we have a very close and special relationship. You said that he would also be visiting Nepal. In fact he will also be visiting Bangladesh after Nepal. Similarly, the Chinese foreign minister will be visiting India as well as Sri Lanka and the Maldives. These goodwill visits are welcomed by us as positive moves towards promoting regional understanding and good neighbourly relations. Our great Chinese neighbour has always taken the deepest interest in promoting friendship with countries of South Asia as well as between those countries themselves. Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping's statement to which you have referred is only the latest affirmation of this policy of China's. Any other motivations attributed to Chinese policies are obviously the result of serious misunderstanding or deliberate distortion.

Pakistan views China's interest in normalising its relations with India and its effort to promote good relations among the countries of South Asia as positive moves which are in harmony with Pakistan's own objectives in the region.



Gen Zia acknowledging the cheers from cricket fans in Lahore

Q: Foreign minister Agha Shahi recently spoke of Pakistan facing a two-front situation as a result of India and Afghanistan having treaties of friendship with the Soviet Union. This formulation apparently assumes that India and Soviet Union are in collusion with each other to attack Pakistan. How does one reconcile this formulation with the fact that throughout the 1970s India has consistently refused to become part of Mr Brezhnev's Asian Security Plan? More specifically, India has taken a categorical stand on the issue of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Mrs Gandhi's statements during Mr Brezhnev's visit to Delhi in December 1980 and, earlier, foreign minister Narasimha Rao's statement during his visit to Moscow in June followed by his statement in the Lok Sabha provide ample testimony of India's refusal to accept the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. At the non-aligned foreign ministers' conference at Delhi in February this year, there was a close proximity between the Indian and Pakistani positions on the need for a political settlement. Does not Mr Shahi's statement amount to judgment being prejudiced by traditional conditioned reflexes?

A: We cannot overlook the fact that India and the Soviet Union are bound together by the treaty of August 1971 which, before the end of that year, resulted in the Indian invasion of East Pakistan. Military cooperation between India and the Soviet Union is a continuous process. With Soviet help, India has built up an enormous military potential and the new acquisitions of Soviet weaponry for the Indian armed forces, already contracted for, would induct more sophisticated military equipment estimated to be worth about eight to ten billion dollars in terms of Western prices. This would be in addition to the annual Indian capacity for indigenous production worth about two and a half billion dollars. The question naturally poses itself to our people as to why this heavy armament programme is undertaken by India which faces no threat whatsoever from any of its neighbours.

With the past experience of Indian forces becoming instrumental in the dismemberment of Pakistan, the continuing hostility towards Pakistan reflected in Indian official and media comments, and the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, the thought of a two-front situation naturally occurs to our people.

Your reference to India's refusal to endorse the Asian Security Plan is somewhat academical, whereas the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971 is a fact. Similarly, India's stand on the issue of Soviet troops in Afghanistan has, forgive me for saying, given an impression of equivocation. The lasting impression is that as between India's commitment to the principles of non-alignment and the obligations it has assumed towards the Soviet Union under the bilateral treaty, the pragmatist approach has prevailed over the principled stand. We feel that at the non-aligned movement conference held at New Delhi recently our endeavours to keep the non-aligned movement on its true course saved much embarrassment to India. So let us not talk about conditioned reflexes.

Q: On Afghanistan, the USA does not appear to be aiming at the withdrawal of the Soviet troops as much as to subject the Russians to mounting politico-military costs. Even though Pakistan has a perfectly valid right, in exercise of its national sovereignty, to align with the American objectives, it cannot but result in jeopardising the security of the entire subcontinent. The Soviets have undoubtedly landed themselves in a political disaster in Afghanistan, but militarily it is no more than a stalemate in which the Soviets cannot be forced to leave in the face of the pressure of insurgency, no matter whatever the quantity and nature of sophisticated arms supplied to the rebels by the USA, that is, if Pakistan agrees to serve as a conduit. So far Pakistan has declined to assume this role. In this context the first priority should be to secure the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. If that becomes secondary to the exigencies of US global strategy, then this region may be faced with a fait accompli.

A: This question has a marvellously twisted mosaic. The pattern is distorted because the lines are infirm. I would not like here to pass judgment on the United States' aims, whatever they may be, but must reject immediately and with all the emphasis at my command the suggestion that there is any propensity on our part to align ourselves with

> If we could implement all the provisions of the Simla Agreement in letter and spirit that itself would ensure permanent peace and friendshi

A strong Pakistan, both in terms of economic well-being and defence capability, should be viewed as an asset by India, if all the good intentions you attribute to India are genuine.

the objectives of US policies.

I must also firmly repudiate the suggestion that the acquisition of arms by Pakistan from the United States will turn Pakistan into a conduit for American arms for the Afghan *mujahideen*. Pakistan under no circumstances will allow itself to be such a conduit. It has, however, every right to strengthen its defence capability when it is faced with a difficult situation. Pakistan wishes to acquire urgently needed defence equipment by purchasing it from the United States, which is a traditional source for such shopping. The size of our purchases is obviously limited by the size of the resources at our disposal which bears no comparison with those of India. The mere prospect of Pakistan's being able, after years of deprivation, to replace some of its obsolete defence equipment should not have caused the hue and cry in India which it has. A strong Pakistan both in terms of economic well-being and defence capability, should be viewed as an asset by India, if all the good intentions you attribute to India are genuine.

One wrong assumption has led to another wrong assumption, that Pakistan may be jeopardising the security of the entire subcontinent. A more pertinent observation would be whether or not the intrusion of Soviet military power in our region, indirectly in the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 and directly in the subversion of Afghanistan's independent and nonaligned status by the Soviet military intervention, are not the main factors in jeopardising the security of the subcontinent. Is it also not pertinent to ask whether India would not have been in a stronger moral position to pronounce unequivocally on the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, if it had not introduced its armed forces in East Pakistan under cover of the bilateral Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship of 1971? Pakistan contemplates no such treaty with the United States. It has made it quite clear that any development in its relations with the United States must be compatible with its independent nonaligned status and membership of the Islamic Conference. Pakistan is certainly not entering into a military-aid relationship with the United States and there is no question of its giving bases on its territory to the United States. One of the imperatives of our foreign policy is never to get ourselves involved in any way whatsoever in the rivalry of the super powers.

I regret to say that such generalizations show a remarkable twist of the imagination. I have already answered the main question in regard to our policy towards Afghanistan in reply to an earlier question by you. We oppose the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan on the basis of principles, and certainly not by military means—which is not even conceivable. We have good relations with the Soviet Union and wish to develop them further. The Afghanistan crisis is not of our making and constitutes an aberration in our relations with the Soviet Union which we hope would be corrected in due course by the logic of events. We have even the beginnings of a dialogue with the Soviet Union on the question of Afghanistan in which the United Nations secretary general is involved through his personal representative.

I agree with you that the first priority should be to secure the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. I have already stated in an earlier reply that the highest priority in our search for a negotiated settlement of the Afghanistan crisis is to bring this about.

Q: How does Pakistan view itself in geo-strategic terms? In the regional sense, is it the front garden of the subcontinent opening out on West Asia, or is it the extension of West Asia into the subcontinent? Does any special privilege attach to repudiating Pakistan's historical ties with the subcontinent? In any event, geographically Pakistan remains a part of the subcontinent, isn't it?

A: Pakistan is not merely an extension of the Middle East into South Asia nor the front garden of South Asia opening out on West Asia. It has a personality and identity of its own. Your question also implies that there is a contradiction between Pakistan's links with its South Asian neighbours and its neighbours to the west. Pakistan has important ties and interests in both regions, and is making efforts to strengthen its cooperation with both. In today's world of fast communications and global interdependence it would be pedantic to fit any country in a geographical pigeonhole.

Q: Pakistan is understandably interested in the security of the Gulf region. So is India. Pakistan's primary emphasis is on Islamic bonds. Secular India's principal objective is security of a neighbouring region, because disturbed conditions in the Gulf cannot allow South Asia to live in peace. India has had very close relations with the Gulf countries. There really is no conflict in this sphere because of the policies of both India and Pakistan, proceeding from different premises, converge on a single objective. In the event should there not be close collaboration between the two countries in pursuit of the common objective?

A: It is true that Pakistan has close Islamic bonds with countries in the Gulf region, but Pakistan is also, like India, a close neighbour of the countries in the area. Its interest in the security and peace of the region stems from both these considerations. However, we are committed to the Makka Declaration and have always supported the Gulf states' position that the security of the region is the exclusive responsibility of the littoral states themselves, without outside interference. Pakistan is not a littoral state of the Gulf and has no role to play in ensuring the security of the region. The question of collaborating with any other country for this purpose does not therefore arise. Our relations with the Gulf states are very fraternal. We wish them well, and do not view India's efforts to develop good relations with them in a spirit of rivalry.

Q: India and Pakistan today find themselves in a situation in which the geo-strategic imperatives have assumed a dimension that both have to take a fresh look at the whole gamut of factors which determine their relationship. It is no longer possible for either of them to devise a security framework on the basis of looking away from each other, because in that event each of them has the capacity to render infructuous whatever the other seeks to achieve. Conceptually, in exercise of their national sovereignty they certainly have the right to do so, but do the geo-strategic imperatives admit of such an attitude?

A: I entirely agree with you that the imperatives of the geo-political situation call for closer understanding between India and Pakistan. Such an understanding must be based on a sympathetic appreciation of each other's security concerns, but it must also reflect full respect for the principle of sovereign equality, which implies that each country is free to develop and maintain friendly relations with a variety of countries. Friendship with any country should not be directed against any other country. That is, in fact, the essence of nonalignment.

Q: Pakistan undoubtedly has the right to seek arms from the USA or anywhere else—so has India. But when all that has been said, the question still remains that security encompasses a lot more than collection of arms and ammunition. The point to appreciate is that India and Pakistan are natural partners in the the geo-strategic sense. Pakistan is the extension of India's defence, while India has the depth and infrastructure, body and mass, technology and resources without which Pakistan cannot sustain its defence should a threat emerge from outside the subcontinent. There are of course political impediments, but a careful look at the factors involved would bear out that there is neither an issue nor a cause over which either of them has anything to gain by opting for an armed conflict. Is it not desirable for our two countries to reconcile with the logic of this situation?

A: I am glad that you appreciate that both Pakistan and India have an equal right as sovereign states to acquire military supplies from whatever source they consider necessary for their defence. If you look at the record this has been precisely our position. What we do not understand is why India wants to deny this right to Pakistan. This reflects an adversary perception of Pakistan on India's part which contradicts your statement that the two countries are natural partners in a geo-strategic sense. If the logic of your statement should find greater acceptance in India things would be far better in the subcontinent. Unfortunately, statements continue to come forth from your country which do not contribute to the process of confidence-building which is so necessary if our countries and peoples are to co-exist as good neighbours.

Q: Pakistan is an important littoral state of the Indian Ocean. From that point of view how do you view the US build-up in the Diego Garcia and the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean? Would not the super power rivalry in this region get further accentuated as a result of the US bid for 'strategic consensus'?

A: Pakistan's policy on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace has been clearly enunciated and reiterated at the United Nations. There are two essential ingredients of this policy: Firstly, all great power rivalry must be eliminated from this area and, secondly, the littoral states must simultaneously evolve a regime which would ensure the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the littoral and hinterland states and ensure that no one state acquires a status of hegemony in the area. Within this framework there is no place for a US bid for a 'strategic consensus' nor for Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

Q: Last year when President Carter rushed to offer aid to Pakistan, Your Excellency had expressed Pakistan's reluctance to accept it without careful consideration of what it involved so that your "national interests do not get violated by, or are not in conflict with the US interest." Are you now satisfied on this count?

A: We subjected (last year's) offer to careful scrutiny and found it wanting both in credibility and durability. The Reagan administration has made a new offer which is an improvement, and is being equally carefully examined. As I have said earlier, our acceptance or rejection of it would depend on whether or not we consider it to be supportive (or disruptive) of our independent nonaligned status and our membership of the Islamic Conference.

Q: Whatever role has been earmarked for Pakistan by the USA in its objective of building up a 'strategic consensus' in the Gulf region, there can be no doubt that the determining factor will be the global strategy of the USA in supersession of whatever objectives Pakistan might have in opting to join this arrangement. A number of US strategists have openly discussed the possibility that the US might have to physically intervene in the Gulf even though the countries of the region have refused to acquiesce in this concept. The other US interest is to have homeport facilities in the region, possibly in Pakistan. What happens if the US seeks from Pakistan some quid pro quo *which is not consistent with your membership of the nonaligned movement?*

We have even the beginnings of a dialogue with the Soviet Union on the question of Afghanistan in which the UN secretary general is involved through his personal representative.

A. B. Vajpayee with Gen. Zia

A: Your concern about the US objective of including Pakistan in a strategic consensus in the Gulf region, or seeking homeport facilities in Pakistan, has been a recurring theme of your questions. This should not be so. I have repeatedly stated that Pakistan is a signatory of the Mecca Declaration which rules out its participation in any strategic consensus of the kind you speak of. I would reiterate this position once again and reaffirm that the question does not arise of our conceding any bases to the United States since that would be inconsistent with our membership of the nonaligned movement.

Q: The USA is seeking to evolve a 'strategic consensus' in the Gulf as part of its global strategy. The Soviet Union would not countenance that. Even before the concept has unfolded in concrete terms, the crisis in Lebanon created by the Israeli instransigence has demonstrated the tenuous basis of the US assumption. Saudi Arabia has backed Syria unmindful of the latter's military links with the Soviet Union. How does Pakistan evaluate the situation developing in Lebanon?

A: We are deeply concerned at the present strife in Lebanon, the blame for which rests entirely with Israel. The crisis in Lebanon has been stirred up by the Zionist entity who by inciting communal tensions wishes to browbeat Syria and establish its hegemony over the whole region, particularly Lebanon. The problem in Lebanon is not of a sectarian nature as Israel attempts to portray and exploit it, but of reaffirming Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and independence. Pakistan fully supports the efforts of the Arab countries in this regard.

Q: The US loans for purchase of arms are going to add substantially to Pakistan's national debt liability. At the close of last fiscal year it stood at around $10 billion. In 1979 US refusal to accommodate Pakistan on debt rescheduling created a situation where the inflow of fresh foreign aid was around 800 million dollars and the outflow was 720 million dollars, resulting in a serious economic crisis for Pakistan. Now the pressure has eased because the US is interested in accommodating Pakistan. But if Pakistan falls out of step with the US the 1979 situation can be recreated. Does this not introduce an element of uncertainty for Pakistan?

A: While it is true that Pakistan, like many other developing countries, faces an enormous economic ploblem on account of servicing of its debts, there are a number of unacceptable and fallacious premises on which this question is based. The entire discussion between the US and Pakistan centres around the principles on which a bilateral relationship is going to be built. If, as I have said elsewhere, the US accepts and indeed shows respect for Pakistan's policy of nonalignment and for its commitments to the Islamic world, the US cannot expect that Pakistan will form part of what is called the strategic consensus. NAM and the OIC are dedicated to evolving common grounds between their members which steer clear of super power rivalries. The governments of USA and Pakistan have both indicated that clearly defined perceptions must constitute the basis for their relationship so that room for uncertainty is eliminated as far as possible. We do not therefore anticipate the kind of situation that you envisage.

Q: A few months back Mrs Gandhi wrote to you underscoring India's commitment to Pakistan's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This does not seem to *have had any significant impact on the media, more particularly the government-owned media. Earlier this month, Mrs Gandhi made highly conciliatory statements in the course of an interview with Mr M. B. Naqvi of the daily,* Muslim. *For that Mrs Gandhi has been accused by the paper editorially of double-talk and double-think. If she says nothing, she is termed cold and aloof. If she comes forth with sentiments of goodwill, she is dubbed clever. In such circumstances, how does one proceed?*

A: This question is most unfortunately worded and could lure one into passing judgments on the credibility of the media, or, worse, of Prime Minister Gandhi herself. We have great respect for Mrs Indira Gandhi and would wish her to take a more sympathetic view of Pakistan, its problems and its policies, which exclude ill-will towards India. The Prime Minister has made many statements in which talk of war has been rather a prominent feature. There have been similar bellicose statements from a number of well-placed Indian commentators. These have evoked responses from our media, sometimes of matching acerbity. All I can say is that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi must be left alone to create her own image in Pakistan by the quality of her statements.

Q: Going by the comment in the media, there seems to be a widely-held belief in Pakistan that India does not want Pakistan to continue as a nation. Would you, Mr President, comment on the validity of the theory that India is out to destroy Pakistan in pursuit of the mythical objective of 'Akhand Bharat'? *Incidentally, this is a phrase more prevalent in Pakistan than in India, where annulment of partition is not even a subject of small-talk, leave alone serious discussion.*

A: Fears in regard to India's intentions orginate in the written and spoken words of opinion-makers in India. You are aware of the recent statements critical of Pakistan which have appeared in your prestigious press and unfriendly utterances by well-known personalities known to be close to the Prime Minister. Less of such statements would produce more of the kind of responses in Pakistan which you cherish.

Q: Purely as a political arrangement, India has no reason to be unhappy with the division of the subcontinent into Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The three-nation polity is entirely feasible and perfectly viable. However, geo-strategically, this land mass very much remains indivisible. During the last 34 years, the strategic environment of the subcontinent as a whole was, by and large, peaceful and free from turmoil; so India and Pakistan could pursue whatever course they desired, even if it brought them into mutual conflicts, or resulted in estrangement and isolation from each other. But has it not already become impossible to continue on that basis?

A: I agree with you that the change in the geo-political situation resulting from the developments in Afghanistan calls for closer relations between the countries of South Asia. We should try to build an atmosphere in which these countries do not feel threatened by each other but view each other's strength as their own. A strong Pakistan should be seen as a bulwark for India and not as a threat.

> Mrs Gandhi has made many statements in which talk of war has been rather a prominent feature. There have been similar bellicose statements from a number of well-placed Indian commentators. These have evoked responses from our media, sometimes of matching acerbity. All I can say is that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi must be left alone to create her own image in Pakistan by the quality of her statements.

Gen. Zia at Havana during non-aligned summit meet

Q. The Simla Agreement was evolved to deal with the aftermath of the 1971 war. In doing that, it worked out a framework for the normalisation of bilateral relations. Meanwhile, there are new developments which require a much larger framework of cooperation between the two countries if they are not to drift apart down the slippery path of antagonism. Your comments please?

A: I feel that the Simla Agreement provided an adequate and a comprehensive framework for the normalisation of Indo-Pakistan relations. This Agreement has worked satisfactorily over the past 8 or 9 years and should continue to guide our efforts to bring the two countries closer together. It is not clear what you mean by a larger framework. If we could implement all the provisions of the Simla Agreement in letter and in spirit that itself would ensure permanent peace and friendship between our two countries. It is premature to talk of a larger framework when the existing framework has yet to reach fulfilment.

Q: Thirtyfour years after partition, India and Pakistan have neither a cause nor an issue which should keep them in conflict with each other. But certain emotional hang-ups are still operating. What can be done by the governments of the two countries so that they build up mutual confidence and dispel each other's apprehensions?

A: The Simla Agreement, for which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi must take full credit, rules out war as a means for settling disputes between Pakistan and India. Both countries are committed under this agreement to seek peaceful settlement of outstanding issues. Emotional hang-ups are prolonged and mistrust and suspicions are kept alive by the continuing lack of a mutually satisfactory

settlement of divisive issues. Such a situation lends itself also to political exploitation by interested parties.

While the process of dialogue between our two countries continues, it is best in my view that the two sides eschew statements which deliberately create a sense of crisis. On the positive side, the atmosphere of relations between the two countries would be greatly improved if India adopts a rational attitude towards Pakistan's legitimate efforts to acquire a defence capability commensurate with the developing threats to its security. Pakistan is the smaller country and has neither the desire nor the capacity to build a military strength in competition or rivalry with India. India should realize that even if our current talks with the United States yield the maximum expected results, Pakistan in the course of the next five years would have acquired a limited defence capability, through purchases only, equivalent to 1/5th of India's acquisition of the most modern military equipment in the past three years and that which has already been contracted for and will be received in the near future. All this would be in addition to India's vast indigenous production capacity. As against this, the arms embargoes imposed in the past by the United States have severely restricted Pakistan's efforts to acquire any defence equipment from US sources worth mentioning during the past five years.

If the factual position of the capabilities and intentions of each country is conveyed accurately and in a forthright manner to its people, we should hear less of the talk of war or prophecies of impending doom. The political leadership as well as the media on both sides have a vital role to play in educating public opinion on the right lines. Facts, responsibly presented, would automatically correct the distorted images seen through the emotional looking glass.

Q: One of the psychological impediments in building up mutual confidence is the feeling in Pakistan that closer relations between the two countries would erode her national sovereignty. There is no rational justification for that. Would you agree that the many common links of culture, heritage, history, geography, language and shared oriental values are not incompatible with the fact of three sovereign nations inhabiting the subcontinent?

A: Culture, heritage, history, geography, language and values, like the seas and the oceans, can unite or divide depending on your capacities and intentions in regard to their use. Pakistan and India have indeed a great deal in common in all these fields which provide a firm foundation for the development of a mutually supportive relationship. A great responsibility rests on the political leadership and opinion-making agencies of our two countries to exploit the potentialities of these powerful factors in a positive manner. We live in a world of hard realities where the richer side of our heritage is often sacrificed at the altar of political ambitions. When we have made a correct appreciation of a problem, we have already taken the first positive step towards its solution. I assure you that Pakistan has enough self confidence to enter into a mutually beneficial relationship with India, provided India fulfils its obligations as the largest country in South Asia to act and speak in a manner which would induce a sense of confidence and security in its smaller neighbours.

Q: The pace of cultural exchanges between India and Pakistan has been utterly disappointing. The intellectuals of the two countries have to interact through the academic institutions and intellectuals of the USA, the UK and Europe. Should there not be seminars with intellectuals from both countries to probe the underlying causes which prevent the two countries from coming closer in brotherly relations?

A: We have already touched upon the subject of culture and related fields in the context of an earlier question by you. You would agree with me that the extent and range of contacts between our peoples in the fields of travel, exports, literary activities and music, and exchange of visits by officials, politicians and journalists alike have greatly increased since my government assumed office. We shall continue our endeavours in this direction and have no doubt that such exchanges would further increase in response to the overall improvement in the atmosphere of the relations between our two countries which we keenly desire. ■

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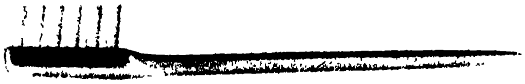

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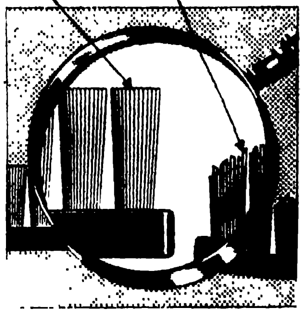

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Shikwa (The Complaint): First manifesto of the two-nation theory

Muhammad Iqbal

Khushwant Singh

KHUSHWANT SINGH, celebrated journalist, novelist, historian and Urdu-lover, took on the challenging task of translating Shikwa *and* Jawab-i-Shikwa, *two of the most famous and controversial poems of Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the greatest Urdu philosopher-poet. Khushwant Singh explains that "I have translated these two poems as part-payment of the debt of gratitude I felt I owed to Iqbal for once again offering me the priceless gems of the Urdu language." The book* Shikwa & Jawab-i-Shikwa, Complaint and Answer, Iqbal's Dialogue with Allah, *has been published by Oxford University Press (Rs.25). We reproduce here the* Shikwa *in English: the translation has been hailed as a major achievement.*

The Complaint' was first recited by Iqbal in 1909 at a gathering of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam in Lahore. It created a sensation. It has ever since remained one of his most controversial compositions: as passionately lauded by its many admirers as it has been criticized by others. Though only a few have expressed reservations about its poetic qualities there are many who question its message. While lauding the achievements of Muslim warriors and the civilizing role of Islam, the poet also reveals a not-too-veiled contempt for non-Muslims, particularly Hindus. *Shikwa* may be regarded as the first manifesto of the two-nation theory which was later elaborated in detail by Chaudhari Rahmat Ali and accepted as the basis of the foundation of a separate state for the Muslims (Pakistan) by Mohammad Ali Jinnah. At the time the poem was published, orthodox Muslims also objected to some of the vocabulary used by Iqbal, particularly the use of the word *harjaee* (unfaithful) for God. Iqbal was obviously conscious of this charge against him when, four years later he composed *Jawab-i-Shikwa*, supposedly a reply by Allah to his complaint.

The theme of *Shikwa* is the poet's complaint against Allah for having been unfair to the Muslim community. After tendering an apology (stanzas 1 and 2) for the audacity of addressing Allah, the poet goes on to protest that if it had not been for the Muslims the messsage of the unity of Godhead would not have spread in the world (3) and worshippers of idols and trees would have continued to flourish and different races and religions remained indifferent (4 and 5) It was the Muslims who carried the all-conquering sword of Islam across the African deserts into Europe (6). They did not do so to acquire wealth or domain but only to glorify the name of God (7). They fought against heavy odds (8), but carried everything from Iran to Rome before them (9). Were there any other people in the world save the Muslims who had thus sold their lives for no cause other than restoring the greatness of God. (10)? What greater proof of their dedication to the cause could there be than the fact that even in the midst of a battle Muslims laid aside their arms to turn to Mecca when it was the time to pray! And irrespective of their status in life kings and commoners stood shoulder to shoulder in one line to pray (11)' It was because of this single-minded devotion to God that they were able to extend their conquests to the furthest extremities of the world known to them (12).

The poet asserts that it was the Muslims who liberated mankind from slavery, maintained the sanctity of the Kaaba and adhered to the injunctions of the Koran. If they could be accused of breach of faith, hadn't Allah also been untrue to them (13)?

The poet laments the decline of Muslim power and the taunts that Muslim-haters fling at them (14 and 15). He is not so much bothered by the fact that infidels enjoy the good things of life; but is piqued by the fact that while infidels get everything here and now Muslims are promised reward after they are dead (16). He wonders why when Allah's bounty is limitless, Muslims should remain poor (17). Or, why Allah bestows favour on people who do not believe in Him (18). Although Muslims are no longer seen in the mehfils of the Lord (19), they remain as faithful as ever and are surprised that Allah should be angry with them (20). Can it be said that Muslims have forgotten the teachings of the Prophet or abandoned the traditions started by Him and relapsed into worshipping idols (21)?

The Muslim's love for Allah may not be as it was in the days gone by but that is not reason enough for Him to abandon them and turn to strangers (22). They are still made of the stuff that could be ignited by the Eternal Flame (23), and if only God turned His gracious eyes on them, the old passion would be rekindled (24). As it is strangers have the world's garden to themselves while poor Muslims sit forlornly and await His coming (25); they are like withered flowers but could come into bloom again; they are like Moses awaiting the light on Mount Sinai (26).

The poet beseeches the Lord to lighten the burden on Muslims, once again raise them to supreme heights and liberate them from the taint of idolatry (27). The garden of Islam is in a shambles. Only one bulbul (the poet) sings away lost in its own song's rapture (28) While all other birds have flown away and the trees have shed their leaves, the poet remains immune to changes of the seasons Alas! if there were someone to listen to his song (29) There is no joy of living except chewing the cud of past memories. Maybe someone will hearken to the poet's melody (30). The poem ends with a note of hope promising a new pact of faith with Allah (31).

1

Why must I forever lose, forever forgo profit that is my due,
Sunk in the gloom of evenings past, no plans for the morrow pursue.
Why must I all attentive be to the nightingale's lament,
Friend, am I as dumb as a flower? Must I remain silent?
My theme makes me bold, makes my tongue more eloquent.
Dust fills my mouth, against Allah I make complaint.

2

We won renown for submitting to Your will—and it is so;
We speak out now, we are compelled to repeat our tale of woe.
We are like the silent lute whose chords are full of voice;
When grief wells up to our lips, we speak; we have no choice.
Lord God! We are Your faithful servants, for a while with us bear,
It is in our nature to always praise You, a small plaint also hear

3

That Your Presence was primal from the beginning of time is true;
The rose also adorned the garden but of its fragrance no one knew.
Justice is all we ask for: You are perfect, You are benevolent.
If there were no breeze, how could the rose have spread its scent?
We Your people were dispersed, no solace could we find.
Or, would Your Beloved's[1] following have gone out of its mind?

[illegible]

Before our time, a strange sight was the world You had made:
Some worshipped stone idols, others bowed to trees and prayed.
Accustomed to believing what they saw, the people's vision wasn't free,
How then could anyone believe in a God he couldn't see?
Do you know of anyone, Lord, who then took Your Name? I ask.
It was the muscle in the Muslim's arms that did Your task.

5

Here on this earth were settled the Seljuqs and the Turanians,
The Chinese lived in China, in Iran lived the Sassanians.
The Greeks flourished in their allotted regions,
In this very world lived the Jews and Christians.
But who did draw their swords in Your Name and fight?
When things had gone wrong, who put them right?

6

Of all the brave warriors, there were none but only we.
Who fought Your battles on land and often on the sea.
Our calls to prayer rang out from the churches of European lands
And floated across Africa's scorching desert sands.
We ruled the world, but regal glories our eyes disdained.
Under the shades of glittering sabres Your creed we proclaimed.

7

All we lived for was to battle; we bore the troubles that came,
And laid down our lives for the glory of Your Name.
We never used our strength to conquer or extend domain,
Would we have played with our lives for nothing but worldly gain?
If our people had run after earth's goods and gold,
Need they have smashed idols, and not idols sold?

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[1] The Beloved refers to Prophet Muhammad

8
Once in the fray, firm we stood our ground, never did we yield,
The most lion-hearted of our foes reeled back and fled the field.
Those who rose against You, against them we turned our ire,
What cared we for their sabres? We fought against canon fire.
On every human heart the image of Your oneness we drew,
Beneath the dagger's point, we proclaimed Your message true.

9
You tell us who were they who pulled down the gates of Khyber?[1]
Who were they that reduced the city that was the pride of Caesar?
Fake gods that men had made, who did break and shatter?
Who routed infidel armies and destroyed them with bloody slaughter?
Who put out and made cold the 'sacred' flame[2] in Iran?
Who retold the story of the one God, Yazdan?

10
Who were the people who asked only for You and no other?
And for You did fight battles and travails suffer?
Whose world-conquering swords spread the might over one and all?
Who stirred mankind with Allah-o-Akbar's clarion call?
Whose dread bent stone idols into fearful submission?
They fell on their faces confessing, 'God is One, the Only One!'

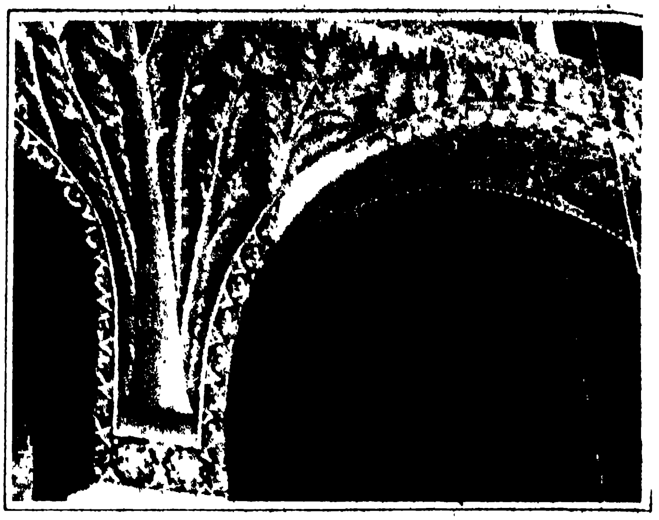
11
In the midst of raging battle if the time came to pray,
Hejazis turned to Mecca, kissed the earth and ceased from fray.
Sultan and slave in single file stood side by side,
Then no servant was nor master, nothing did them divide.
Between serf and lord, needy and rich, difference there was none.
When they appeared in Your court, they came as equals and one.

12
In this banquet hall of time and space, from dawn to dusk we spent,
Filled with the wine of faith, like goblets round we went.
Over hills and plains we took Your message; this was our task.
Do you know of an occasion we failed You? is all we ask.
Over wastes and wildernesses of land and sea,
Into the Atlantic Ocean[3] we galloped on our steed.

13
We blotted out the smear of falsehood from the pages of history,
We freed mankind from the chains of slavery.
The floors of Your Kaaba with our foreheads we swept,
The Koran you sent us we clasped to our breast
Even so you accuse us of lack of faith on our part·
If we lacked faith, you did little to win our heart.

14
There are people of other faiths, some of them transgressors.
Some are humble; drunk with the spirit of arrogance are others.
Some are indolent, some ignorant, some endowed with brain,
Hundreds of others there are who even despair of Your Name.
Your blessings are showered on homes of unbelievers, strangers all.
Only on the poor Muslim, Your wrath like lightning falls.

15
In the temples of idolatry, the idols say, 'The Muslims are gone!'
They rejoice that the guardians of the Kaaba have withdrawn.
From the world's caravanserais singing camel-drivers have vanished;
The Koran tucked under their arms they have departed.
These infidels smirk and snigger at us, are You aware?
For the message of Your oneness, do You anymore care?


Mosaics decorating the portico of the Great Mosque of Damascus, Syria, 715.

16
Our complaint is not that they are rich, that their coffers overflow;
They who have no manners and of polite speech nothing know.
What injustice! Here and now are houris and palaces to infidels given;
While the poor Muslim is promised houris only after he goes to heaven.
Neither favour nor kindness is shown towards us anymore;
Where is the affection You showed us in the days of yore?

17
Why amongst Muslims is worldly wealth rarely found?
Great is Your power beyond measure, without bound,
If it were Your will, water would bubble forth from the bosom of arid land,
And the traveller lashed by waves of mirages in the sand.
Our lot is strangers' taunts, ill-repute and penury;
Must disgrace be our lot who gave their lives for You?

18
Now on strangers does the world bestow its favours and esteem,
All we have been left with is a phantom world and a dream
Others have taken over the world, our days are done;
Say not then, 'None in the world believed God there is but one!
All we live for is to hear the world resound with Your name;
How can it be that the *saqi* goes but the goblets remain?

19
Your mehfil is dissolved, those who loved you are also gone:
No sighs through the nights of longing, no lamenting at dawn.
We gave our hearts to You, took the wages You did bestow;
But hardly had we taken our seats, You ordered us to go.
As lovers we came, as lovers departed with promise for tomorrow.
Now search for us with the light that on Your radiant face does glow.

20
Leila's[4] love is as intense, Qais desires her evermore,
On Nejd's hills and dales, the deer swift-footed as before.
The same love beats in the heart, beauty is as bewitching and magical,
Your messenger Ahmed's following 'still' abides, Your presence is eternal

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[1] Khyber was a stronghold of Jewish tribes near Medina and was captured by Hazrat Ali the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law

[2] This refers to the sacred flame worshipped by the Zoroastrians of Persia.

[3] *Behr-i-Zulmut* When Arab conquerors came to the westernmost shores of Africa which they considered the end of the earth, they are said to have exclaimed, 'Great God! Had there been land further we would have conquered it in Your name.

[4] This refers to the famous love classic of Leila and Majnun (also known as Qais)

Interior of the Great Mosque of Cordoba, Spain, begun 785. The building is now a Christian cathedral.

Neither rhyme nor reason has Your displeasure, what does it mean?
On the faithful is Your angry eye of censure! What does it mean?

21

Did we abandon You or Your Arab messenger forsake?
Did we trade in making idols? Did we not idols break?
Did we forsake love because of the anguish with which it's fought?
Give up the traditions of Salman,[1] forget what Ovais Qarani[2] taught?
The flame of Allah's greatness still in our hearts we nourish.
The life of Bilal[3] the Ethion remains the model that we cherish.

22

Our love may not be what it was, nor told with the same blandishments;
We may not tread the same path of submission, nor the same way give consent.
Our hearts are troubled, their compass needles from Mecca may have swerved,
Perhaps the old laws of faithfulness we may not have fully observed.
But sometimes towards us, at times to others you have affection shown,
It's not something one should say, You too have not been true to Your own.

23

On Faran's[4] summit You gave religion its final shape and form;
With a single gesture You carried a thousand hearts by storm.
You fired with zeal the pursuit of love which was our aim;
The beauty of Your burning cheeks set the entire mehfil aflame.
Why today no sparks smoulder in our bosoms at all?
We are the same inflammable stuff, don't You recall?

24

The valley of Nejd no longer rings with the sound of Qais' chains:
No more is he crazed to glimpse Leila's litter, no more his eyes he strains.
We have lost the daring of former days, we are not the same. Our hearts are cold.
You are no longer the spirit of the mehfil, ruin is on our household.
O happy day, return a hundred times with all Your grace!
Drop Your veil and let us gaze upon your lovely face.

25

Strangers revel in the garden, beside a stream they are sitting;
Wine goblets in their hands, hearing the cuckoo singing.
Far from the garden, far away from its notes of revelry,
Your lovers sit by themselves awaiting the moment to praise You.
Rekindle in Your moths passion to burn themselves on the flame;
Bid the old lightning strike, brand our breasts with Your name.

26

A lost and wandering people towards Hejaz turn their longing eyes,
As a wingless bulbul takes to wing for the love of open skies.
Every bud in the garden longs to bloom to release the fragrance in its body,
So awaits the lute the plectrum, touch its chords, listen to its melody.
Impatient and agitated are notes to burst forth from the strings;
The mountain of Moses trembles eagerly to be ignited by Your lightning.

27

A people You had blessed, lighten the burdens they bear,
Raise the poor down-trodden ant and make it Solomon's peer.
Make abundant that rare commodity love, so that all may buy and sell,
Convert to Islam India's millions who still in temples dwell.
Long have we suffered, see how grief's blood flows down the drain,
From a heart pierced by the scalpel, hear this cry of pain.

28

The scent of the rose stole out, and the garden's secret is betrayed.
What calamity! a flower itself should the traitor's role have played.
The lute of the garden is broken, the season of flowers gone,
Trees' branches are bare, the garden's songsters have flown.
Remains alone the bulbul, in its song's raptures lost.
Its breast is full of melodies that are still tempest-tossed.

29

The ring-doves have left the cypress and from its garden flown;
Flowers have shed their petals which are at random strewn.
The beaten paths of the garden lie desolate and forlorn;
Branches are stripped of leaves that they once had worn.
He alone from the chains of changing seasons remained unbent;
Alas! not one there was in the garden to hear his lament.

30

In giving up our lives there is no gladness, nor is there joy in living;
The only pleasure is in writing verse and in our own heart's blood drinking.
My mind's mirror is studded with many gems sparkling, bright;
In my breast are locked visions aching to burst into light.
But there are none in the garden with eyes to attest;
Not one bleeding tulip bearing a scar within its breast.

31

Let the lament of this lonely bulbul pierce the hearts of all,
Arouse the hearts of the sleeping, with this my clarion call.
Transfused with fresh blood, a new compact of faith we'll sign
Let our hearts thirst again for a sip of the vintage wine.
What if the pitcher be Persian, from Hejaz is the wine I serve.
What if the song be Indian, it is Hejazi in its verve.

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[1] Salman Farsi was an Iranian fire-worshipper who was converted to Islam by the Prophet and became a close companion

[2] Ovais Qarani of Yemen who migrated after the death of the Prophet and is rated amongst his *Tabiyin*-followers

[3] Bilal, an Abyssinian slave who became a close companion of the Prophet and earned renown for his loud and melodious calls to prayer, *azan*

[4] Mountain in Sinai

"Mrs Gandhi can give me the keys and sleep"

ARUN SHOURIE had lunch with Karnataka chief minister R. Gundu Rao in Bangalore on 29 May. And during that lunch, the irrepressible CM spoke with unusual frankness about what he thought of cabinet ministers, why Mrs Gandhi trusts him—and who would succeed Mrs Gandhi

"Among your party's chief ministers," I asked, "who has reason to feel most secure?"

"I."

"And who should be feeling most insecure?"

"Pahadia."

That is Gundu Rao giving you the news.

It is not often that chief ministers call me over for lunch. But on Friday, 29 May, one did. Courtesy F. M. Khan, the MP, next to who some thoughtful IA official seated me on a flight from Delhi to Bangalore. "You must see me and the chief minister," he had said as we parted, his strong men having lifted not just his bag but mine to the airport.

And so it was that, as Gundu Rao's press secretary told me later, at Khan's prompting Gundu Rao's office summoned me to lunch with him. A substantial meal—several liveried attendants, three varieties of meat, fish, *biryani*, assorted vegetables....and for dessert pineapple, mango as well as *rasmalai*. Can't complain.

Khan was there, as was Gundu Rao's press secretary, a young man till recently with UNI, and *The Indian Express* chief reporter in Bangalore.

A big man with the thick jowls and heavy build so favoured by our film makers in the south, Gundu Rao was not as ferocious as I would have imagined from his outbursts at pressmen. "They lead contemptible lives," he had said, "instead of leading such lives they should drown themselves in the Bay of Bengal or the Arabian Sea..." Not ferocious at all, in fact an amiable fellow with little guile; the sort it seemed to me, who would be kept by the company he keeps. Baby-elephantish, I thought; an impression heightened by the ambling gait that, with flesh, comes to mark our politicians as soon as they alight in office. *Gajagamane*, as Kalidasa would say!

F. M. Khan, on the other hand, could be your neighbour next door, non-descript as a man in his trade and with his reputation should be. (He was gracious enough to club his reputation and mine—"notorious in each other's eyes," he said).

But to get back to the news. For the news isn't just that Gundu Rao feels he has nothing to fear, but why he feels thus; not that he too says there is hardly a minister in the central cabinet worth the name but that why, inspite of this being the case, almost everyone will survive; not that he talks and brags so freely to a stranger, but that what he, a man presiding over a state of over thirty million, says over an hour and a half doesn't quite measure up to an adolescent's mental level.

"And who is secure at the centre?"

"Venkataraman," he said, and after a pause, "also Narasimha Rao."

"No one else?"

"Pranab Mukherjee; he is." I wasn't surprised; the buying and selling kind, I thought...."Also," (and I must say this name wasn't even in my subconscious, but that just shows you how closely these fellows watch Mrs Gandhi's eyebrows and how careless we are) "Bhishma Narain Singh and Stephen."

"Cabinet ministers, while they don't solve any problems, at least they don't create problems for her. Veerendra Patil, she keeps him ... What can he do? He can't go back to Janata. He can't use his caste at the centre. So she keeps him, a snake without teeth ...Even if he tries to bite he can't ... He is just a packet of cigarettes."

"Stephen? But he is such a.. " I had just about half uttered "lout" when Gundu Rao rushed to explain all. "Kerala politics," Gundu Rao said. "Who else is there from Kerala? I know how keen she was to get him back in Parliament when he lost in Delhi. That is why I arranged Gulbarga. No one else from Kerala," he concluded, lighting his Dunhill cigarette.

"Does Mrs Gandhi talk freely to you about these things?" I asked.

"Oh yes, freely. Just day before yesterday, I was in Delhi and she talked to me for forty minutes."

"She is not dictatorial, as many people say." That was F. M. Khan. "In fact she is very jovial, joking. She lets everybody speak freely at executive committee meetings, even open sessions." He was in his elements now, so I did not interrupt him with my theories of why she lets everyone talk..."Even I am more dictatorial than she is," Khan went on.

"His enemies call him Field Marshal Khan," said Raghavan, the local chief reporter of *Indian Express*.

"No, no, not just my enemies, my friends too," he said with visible relish.

"His enemies call him what you said. His friends," said his friend Gundu Rao, "call him Father-Mother Khan."

I was back to Gundu Rao, "Are you close to her (Mrs Gandhi)?" "Yes, yes, close. Family reasons, government reasons. Political reasons."

"So you aren't feeling insecure?"

"No."

"What accounts for your security?"

"She trusts me. Who else can she trust in the south? Of the four states, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are not with us. So it is Anjiah or me. Who else can she trust?"

That was a bit much for Khan, he fidgeted. "Who else is there she can trust?" Gundu Rao asked again. Khan fidgeted more.

"Loyalty, honesty," Gundu Rao

resumed, and then quickly corrected himself, "loyalty and efficiency. She wants that. Loyalty first of course."

For efficiency, he had already told me what he had done to ensure prompt clearance of files and to ensure that no politicians interfered with transfers. That, he had assured me, was all that was needed. He was on loyalty now."She can give me the keys and sleep. I may not add to the cash there," he chuckled, "but at least I won't take it away."

"You mean," I butted in, not to miss the opportunity, "there is cash there?" A sport, he joined the laughter.

"When she doesn't want you, you must say, 'Madam, here is my resignation,' then she will not act. I told Channa Reddy, you can quote me when you meet him. Six months before he resigned I knew he was going. I knew."

"How did you know?" I asked, wanting to learn how much confidants know.

"He went to Delhi. For one week she didn't give him an interview. I met her five times in one week. I knew he was going..." Such is the data of an insider... "I told him," he resumed, giving a clue to what he might do if he were kept waiting, "Go to her, give her your resignation. He said, 'No...I will talk to her.' Later also, you can check with him, I told him, 'It is still not too late, give your resignation to her...She may not...If she does not give me an interview, half my cabinet will leave me, they will catch the flight to Delhi to back someone else. So, I say, hand in your resignation. What is there, after all...?' I don't care, I am a different type of man. ."

Would he not agree, I asked with what I thought was permissible guile, that while his government had been working hard, the central government had not lived up to people's expectations?

He did agree. "There are only (*expunged*) ministers in the central cabinet," he said, saying that he was giving me the figure only for my information and not for publication. "Only (*expunged*)," he repeated, and he named them. The digit was not astronomical. In fact, well within the grasp of a two-year-old.

"But then why does she keep such fellows in the cabinet?" I asked, feigning ignorance of my theories on the subject. (Gundu Rao hadn't to feign ignorance of them, I am happy to report, he isn't the reading kind: "On the move, always on the move," as he described himself... The illiterate politican is my special favourite, for he is the one who, inspite of all that you have been writing, is always ready to share all he knows with you).

"Because while they don't solve any problems," he said, "at least they don't create any problems for her. Veerendra Patil, she keeps him. In fact, I suggested, keep him in the executive, what can he do? He can't go back to Janata. He can't use his caste at the centre. So she keeps him, a snake without teeth. He may go up and down (*and his right hand slithered over his left arm and on to his ample chest*) but even if he *tries* to bite, he can't. But Sukhadia... If she kept people like him, they may use the position to strengthen themselves and one day revolt again... They'll create problems for her every day and won't let her function. So she keeps Veerendra Patil. He is just a packet of cigarettes," he said, picking his pack of Dunhills from the table and throwing it back "just a packet of cigarettes, you can pick it up or throw it away..."

Gundu Rao

"But all this has consequence," I said, "No government, no administration..."

"Yes, it is a very big problem for her. There is no one. But we will meet after by-elections. She will take big decisions."

"Are many nervous on that account?"

"Oh, yes." He and Khan laughed. "But no chief minister will be changed, I tell you that."

"Not even Jagannath Mishra?" I asked, inquiring after one of my special favourites.

"But you don't see," he said, telling me what so many tell me, that I don't see. "Who is the alternative? Kedar Pande? We all know what Kedar Pande is. At least in talking Mishra is quite OK and Mrs Gandhi must have the support of brahmins in Bihar. A. P. Sharma and Kesari—they don't even talk to each other..."

"How would you describe the state of the party?"

"Yes," he was candid in this, as in everything else, "it is Mrs Gandhi's image only that is raising the party to such high levels..."

"At the centre, will the Giani go?" I asked, thinking of the lone hope of Faridkot." No, his portfolio may be changed. But he won't be dropped. Punjab politics. Only *chota motas* will be dropped. No heavies."

"Not even Abdul Ghani Chowdhuri?" I asked, wanting to know how light would qualify a man as heavy, "Doesn't keeping such a man in the cabinet harm Mrs Gandhi?"

You look at things only from one side." That was Khan supplying education. "Mrs Gandhi sees things from many sides. Who else is there from Bengal? We have only three MPs from there. And religion also. And he won the election against everybody."

Many curiosities there, I thought. Everyone is feeling insecure and yet no one can really be dropped. Not because anyone even claims to be good at his job, but by default. Gundu Rao, because there isn't anyone else Mrs Gandhi can trust in the south. Stephen, because of Kerala politics. Zail Singh, because of Punjab politics. Mishra, because of the situation in Bihar. Abdul Ghani because of that in Bengal. And this is not just in fact, but in the eyes of the ones who survive... We think they are helpless, they know she is.

(But there was no use directing Gundu Rao's attention to any of this. I had asked earlier, "How would you characterise the political situation in the country?" "We shall win the elections," is all he had by way of reply. "But" I said, "you won three quarters of the seats in Andhra and still you can't supply a government. Isn't there more to the situation than winning elections?" Silence is all I had got)...

So now I again turned to something more comprehensible: "As that is the state of the party, with people not talking to each other, and of the government, with hardly a minister worth calling a minister," I asked, "what of the country if something should suddenly happen to Mrs Gandhi as it did to Sanjay?"

"Such things cannot be decided in advance..." Gundu Rao began. But that flight into abstract speculation did not last more than that sentence. He was back to specifics: "Touch wood", he said, meaning 'God forbid.' Touching the table and then his head, he said "You too touch wood. If something happens to Mrs Gandhi, in twenty eight hours Rajiv will be Prime minister"

"Oh come..." I protested, "you must have said the same thing about Sanjay just a year ago."

"No, I am talking about his ability. I am not saying that just now the majority of MPs support him. But no one will be able to agree on anybody else. Somebody from Maharashtra? Karnataka people will say, 'Anybody, but him.' Somebody from Tamil Nadu? Everyone will say, 'They are not nationalists.' From Bengal? Nobody will agree on a Bengali; 'Chauvinists,' everyone will say... Twenty eight hours, and Rajiv will be PM.... If Kamaraj and Atulya Ghose and S. K. Patil and all of them could for a moment have agreed on Kamaraj, Mrs Gandhi would never have become Prime Minister... In one day, I am telling you, in twenty hours Rajiv will be PM..."

God save the queen... ■

The hunt for the Third Man

Major General Abul Manzoor could not have been acting alone. He was simply too intelligent to begin a coup—where failure would mean death—without the promise of support from a powerful ally. Who was that ally? Is it possible that this "ally" is still among those who are in power today in Dacca, having betrayed Maj Gen Abul Manzoor when things started going wrong? What lends credence to this theory is the way in which Manzoor lost his life. Who killed him? Was it this "Third Man"? IAN JACK has returned from Bangladesh with this fascinating story.

Travellers from Bangladesh during the days that followed the murder of President Zia had to undergo informalities as well as formalities when they arrived in India. This is known in the trade as debriefing. The man who debriefed me at Dum Dum airport wore a safari shirt and worked for the ministry of external affairs. He was pleasant and diffident, and I told him all I knew, or most of it; not, I hasten to add, because I'm anti-Bangladeshi or in the pay of Mrs G, but simply because the facts at my disposal were few and undramatic.

"So," he said, "how are things in Dacca?"

I outlined the position in the Bangladesh capital: a superabundance of cycle rickshaws, Benson and Hedges cigarettes freely available, the Intercontinental Hotel's seafood festival cancelled for "unavoidable reasons," 200 drowned as launch sinks in the Sunderbans, lakhs mourn (estimates range from 5 to 20) as Zia is buried.

"And the army?" he asked. "Dacca is under curfew I believe. There are troops and anti-aircraft guns at the airport."

No. Dacca had no more troops on the streets than usual. There was no curfew that I could detect, nor was there any sign of anti-aircraft weaponry at Dacca airport. There was such a lack of *visible* tension, I said, that a gloomy BBC camera crew had packed their bags and quit for Delhi after only a day (vocal tension—the fears which Bangladeshis express privately—is a different matter, which we will come back to later).

"And what of Major-General Manzoor? Is he dead? Do you know who killed him?"

Ah. Here our man had hit the nub of the question. All week it has puzzled and intrigued the foreign press corps encamped in the Intercontinental. Again, the facts are few. Speculation, on the other hand, is rampant—and justified, given the baffling changes of story from the Bangladesh government. It is an important question because the motives and methods of the criminal are always the most interesting part of any crime. This is true of the common domestic murder; it becomes even truer (my apologies to the English language) when the victim is a leading world politician. Some of us at the Intercontinental could not help remembering that President Kennedy's assassin was shot before he had a chance to speak—by a man apparently inflamed by the assassin's deed. Few people now believe it was quite as simple as that; many choose to believe that Lee Harvey Oswald was silenced because, in the classic phrase, he knew too much. And now we have General Manzoor in a similar situation. He kills his head of state and then, if the official version is to be believed, gets himself murdered by angry troops.

This version of the story is worth examining in detail. It did not take its full shape until Wednesday evening, two days after Manzoor is alleged to have died (even on Tuesday evening Bangladesh television simply said Manzoor had "fled"). I have put it together from stories in the government-owned press and leaks (of an inspired variety, no doubt) from government officials.

The official version

Zia and Manzoor, once intimates, have become rivals. Zia posts Manzoor to Chittagong and Manzoor is not best pleased, because he thinks he should be the army chief. The day before Zia arrives in Chittagong, Manzoor learns that he is soon to be transferred to head the army's staff college. More displeasure and anger. The next morning (3.50 am, Saturday) his troops begin to bombard the Chittagong circuit house with mortars, rockets and machine gun fire. Zia awakes in his second-floor bedroom, opens the door to find out what's going on, and is immediately raked by bullets. By 4.15 the assassination is over; Zia and six to eight bodyguards are dead, though many others in the President's group, including the general secretary of the Bangladesh National Party, A. Q. M. Badruddoza, survive unhurt. Later that morning Manzoor broadcasts fundamentalist Islamic and anti-Indian views over Radio Chittagong.

Then the army chief in Dacca, Lieutenant General Ershad, tells Manzoor to surrender. A deadline is set—noon, Sunday; later extended to 6 am Monday. A letter is sent by Red Cross messenger. Manzoor reads it and says: "I am undone." He sends troops to man positions on the Dacca-Chittagong road, and later learns that these troops are defecting to the government side. By 9 pm on Sunday, in the words of the *Bangladesh Observer*, he has become "extremely unbalanced and insane." At 3.35 am on Monday he decamps with his wife and children in a staff car. Other rebel officers follow him in jeeps. They drive towards Fatikchari (about 25 miles north of Chittagong) and the Tripura border.

At 6.25 pm the same day, a police inspector called Kuddus arrests Manzoor and his family near Fatikchari. He summons an army convoy from Chittagong, which returns to Chittagong cantonment with Manzoor, his family and two other rebel officers. On its way it is ambushed by "armed agitated people"—either (a) Manzoor supporters who want to grab their general, or (b) loyal and angry troops, depending on which version you believe. Gunfire is exchanged. The two rebel officers die immediately. Manzoor succumbs from wounds on his way to hospital in Chittagong. Nobody else is hurt.

In short, an overly-ambitious general goes a little crazy and gets his come-uppance from his own men, perhaps by accident. It may be true. Few believe it.

Is the story credible?

In Dacca a former friend and colleague of Manzoor's told me: "I doubt if any army officer believes that story for a moment. Manzoor is or was an extremely intelligent, sophisticated and pragmatic man—and an extremely popular general within the army. An intelligent general doesn't try to flee Bangladesh by driving along main roads in a staff car. And you would need to be more than a little crazy to mount a coup in Chittagong without support in Dacca. No, I'm afraid it doesn't make any sense."

This kind of talk is common in Dacca—within the privacy of bungalows. It is usually accompanied by fears that the army is seeking to renew its role as the government of Bangladesh; that more bloodshed cannot be ruled out; and that the presidential elections, required under the constitution to be held before November, may never take place despite the official announcement that they will. It also leads to the construction of alternative theories of what took place in Chittagong. There are three of these:

One, that events in Chittagong got out of Manzoor's control, that Zia was killed without his consent, that Manzoor tried to make the best of things by seeking a popular mandate for what he had done (hence the Islamic broadcast; Manzoor, say his friends, was neither particularly devout nor especially anti-Indian). Hardly believable.
Two, that Manzoor thought he had support in Dacca, but that the rest of the army dithered and split, and that Manzoor was killed—*inside* Chittagong cantonment—because he could name names. Slightly believable.
Three, that both deaths, Zia's *and* Manzoor's, were planned by an unknown Mr Big who will emerge as the leader of Bangladesh over the next six months. This theory appeals particularly to conspiracy theorists, of whom (and contrary to popular belief) there are not many among foreign correspondents. In the Dacca Intercontinental it became known as the "Agatha Christie" or "Machiavelli" theory, and sometimes as The Hunt for The Third Man.

Meanwhile, the man at Dum Dum airport wanted to know, did *I* believe it. I replied truthfully. I said I did not know. But I could not help rephrasing to myself a saying of Oscar Wilde's Lady Bracknell. To lose one general is unfortunate; to lose two smacks of carelessness, or worse. ■

After Zia, who?

If presidential elections are held in Bangladesh on schedule within the next six months, then the most likely candidate of late Ziaur Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party for the office will be his widow. The likely candidate for the opposition Awami League is Sheikh Mujib's daughter Hasina Wajed. If, however, the elections are held before 28 September Begum Hasina will not qualify to contest. In that event the dapper foreign minister under Mujib, Dr Kamal Hossein, will. TOOSHAR PANDIT reports:

People, governments, media are all asking the same, inevitable questions: will Bangladesh be able to replace the late Ziaur Rahman peacefully, and if yes then who will contest the presidential elections. On the other hand, if blood is to flow again in Dacca, then which general will emerge the winner in this round?

It is too early for any clear-cut answer; this is the season for backroom manoeuvring on complicated chess-boards. First, one has to take into account the army which, no matter who assumes official power or how, is today and will continue to remain a powerful force in the country's affairs. But it is not, at the moment, so powerful that it could, on its own, dictate what the future will be like. It has been hurt badly by successive coups and countercoups by which the loyalties of generals have changed faster than situations, and created that environment where personal ambition often got precedence over the good of both the army and the nation. Nor is there any single leader left in the armed forces who can command the affection and support of all the men in uniform, or even a substantial portion of them. The best that the army can hope to do in such circumstances is run things by remote control, through a pliable civilian. Even ambitious officers in the Bangladesh army do not seem too keen to grab the crown—for instance, Mir Shaukat Ali, appointed military adviser to Zia only a few months ago after being relieved of his command of an army division. Crowned heads have been rolling too frequently for anyone's comfort.

Begum Ziaur Rahman

The present vice president, Mr Abdus Sattar, would have been just the right kind of chief of state for the army. But he is old and ill. Next in importance would be the leaders of the two broad factions within the BNP—the general secretary A. Q. M. Badruddoza, with the moderates behind him, and the present Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman who has the support of those who might be loosely called fundamentalists, plus of all those who opposed the break-up of Pakistan in 1971 (they are not a weak lobby by any means). The death of the President has already led to efforts by powerful leaders to assert themselves and grab whatever power they can take in the vacuum. The post of the Prime Minister was quite inconsequential so long as Zia was alive, but matters are different now. After all, the system that Zia was building had not yet acquired depth in the sense that tradition and precedence could define specific roles and delineation of power. In fact, according to some people, President Zia was on the point of making Badruddoza the Prime Minister in place of Shah Azizur Rahman, a former Muslim League leader, when his tragic end came.

(l to r) 1. *Maj Gen Mir Shaukat* 2. *M. A. G. Osmany* 3. *Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen H. M. Ershad* 4. *Navy chief* 5. *Air Force chief*

So, conforming to what is becoming a subcontinental tradition, the person who may find it easiest to gain the support of all the various props that keep the BNP in power is the wife of the dead President. If she agrees, Mrs Ziaur Rahman would not only be able to reconcile the civilian factions behind her but also the armed factions. If she does not, the man to watch is M. A. G. Osmany. It is clear now that neither the army nor the civilians can hang on to power by ignoring one another: for stability the two must cooperate. Osmany is one man who can get support from both the sections. His credentials are impressive. His record during the liberation war speaks for itself; he commanded the Mukti Bahini irregulars. He is known to be a strict disciplinarian and his integrity is unimpeachable. He knows the army well, having served for decades; during the Pakistan days he fought the establishment and won the battle to raise the first Bengali regiment, the East Bengal regiment.

Nor is Osmany too closely aligned to any existing political faction. His value is recognised by groups bitterly opposed to one another. After Mujib was killed and Khondakar Moshtaque became the President, Osmany was given the key job of defence adviser.

Khondakar Mustaque Ahmed

The four-day king Khaled Musharraf who sent the Moshtaque government packing also had tremendous confidence in Osmany. But Osmany became instrumental in bringing Zia to power by falling out with Moshtaque over the latter's strident fundamentalism. Osmany was the first to voice his dissent over Mujib's one-party rule in protest against which he left the Awami League and resigned from Parliament. And again, he was the first leader, who on falling out with Mostaque Ahmed, demanded that Mujib be restored to his rightful place in history, no matter what mistakes he may have committed. Then in 1978, he fought against Zia in the presidential polls, getting over 20 per cent of the vote—not a mean achievement considering that Zia was then riding the crest of popularity. And after the latest coup attempt too, it was Osmany's voice that came over Dacca Radio appealing to the troops to discard Maj Gen Manzoor: that, indeed, is considered one of the reasons for its failure. But Osmany is not an easy person to manipulate as he has a mind of his own.

However, the stiffest challenge to the BNP candidate will come from the Awami League, which remains the best-organised party at the grassroots level. Given the slightest chance, the Awami League will vigorously contest the polls which must be held within the next six months if the constitution is not to be amended or abrogated. Mujib's daughter, Hasina Wajed, is sure to become the Awami League's nominee. She was recalled from exile in India to head the party so that factional feuds could not break it up. As Mujib's daughter she has considerable emotional appeal. But to qualify for the contest she must be 35. This she will be only on 28 September. Given the chance, she could be a formidable contestant. And to forestall her the people who are in power now may decide to hold the election before she turns 35. In that event Mujib's foreign minister, Dr Kamal Hossein, is likely to be the Awami League's best bet. Once earlier, in 1978, the Awami League had chosen him to fight for the office—against Ziaur Rahman—before deciding to support M. A. G. Osmany as the candidate for the combined opposition.

Lastly, there is no way one can dismiss the wily Khondakar Moshtaque in any analysis of the future. He is one of the most crafty politicians in Dacca, and he has the undoubted support of many foreign countries. His Democratic League could become the spearhead of the rightists. He could become the favourite of that strong group which remained in Pakistan during 1971, and which came back to Bangladesh only after the liberation war was over. ■

Hasina Wajed

"Hey, See! I'm Tingling!"

Let me tell you about a fantastic new way of enjoying yourself.

It's called Tingling.

Tingling is like laughter, only it isn't fattening.

Tingling brings a kind of attractive gleam to your eyes and highlights the fluttering of your eyelashes.

Tingling is irresistible. And you can do it anywhere.

You can Tingle at home. You can Tingle at a party. You can even Tingle with someone you love!

"How do I Tingle?"

First of all, you need to know a little about your body and its sensitive zones.

There is one part of your body which is the most sensitive of all.

And that is your tongue.

(Tickling yourself behind the knees with a goose feather is a very, very far second.)

It is therefore important for you to concentrate on your tongue when you want to Tingle.

"Now, do this carefully."

Very, very lovingly open up a chilled frosted bottle of the Tingler.

It should open with a pop, but ever so soft a pop. (If you open it fast, you're wasting some Tingle.)

Now, pour the bubbly drink carefully into a chilled glass. Gently does it.

Take a large sip and don't swallow.

Move your tongue around, and you'll discover the Tingle at that moment.

Thousands of tiny bubbles will explode against your palate.

"Whew! Just telling you about it makes me Tingle!"

Follow the procedure, mouthful after mouthful. Take your time. Don't hurry.

You now know the secret of Tingling.

But a word of advice here. Don't forget to concentrate on what your tongue feels.

Otherwise you won't taste the crisp, clean flavour of the Tingler.

"Don't give up!"

After some practice you will learn how to make the Tingle spread to other parts of your body.

Right now I can make the Tingle reach the base of my spine.

Now I'm practicing to make the Tingle reach the back of my knees.

Then I can do without that silly goose feather.

Get the taste that tingles!

HTD-MBL-6761

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STRENGTHENS AND WHITENS TEETH, KEEPS GUMS HEALTHY
PREVENTS BAD BREATH
बैद्यनाथ
दन्तमंजन
लाल

The look. The sparkle. The smile. Of nature's care.

From

Baidyanath

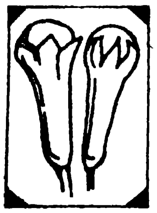
Herbal Toothpowder (red)

Care for your teeth the natural way with *Baidyanath* Herbal Toothpowder. The unique herbal ingredients in this toothpowder not only cure bad breath and tooth decay but also restore natural shine and sparkle to your teeth. While at the same time keeping your gums and teeth healthy and strong.

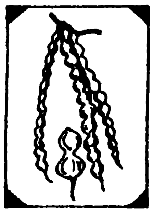
Baidyanath manufactures 700 Ayurvedic medicines at 5 modern factories.

Baidyanath

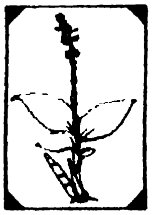
Herbal Toothpowder not only cleans. It cures.


1. Clove Oil stops gum pain

2. Tumbru stops mouth odour


3. Babbul heals mouth ulcers

4. Peepal kills tooth bacteria


5. South strengthens teeth roots

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BAB/1-81

How Mrs Gandhi has wrecked a national left front

By BARUN SENGUPTA

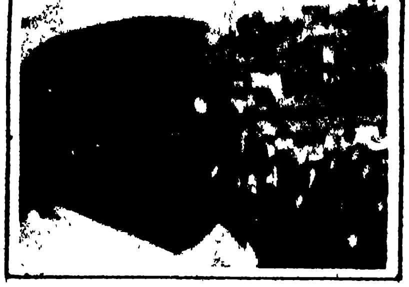
A virtual scramble is on among Congress(U) leaders to join Mrs Gandhi's party. There is, of course, nothing new about this. Some of them were keen to join the Congress(I) soon after the collapse of Mr Charan Singh's government; others tried to get in after the results of the 1980 Lok Sabha elections. Although they had no conditions for joining the Congress(I), they did have one fear: Sanjay Gandhi. They thought that even if they could get in, Sanjay Gandhi would not allow them much power. Some of them even tried in vain to cultivate Sanjay through his personal friends. So when Sanjay Gandhi died, they welcomed it as a Godsend, any hesitation was now over, and they made a beeline for the doors of Mrs Gandhi's party. Not to speak of others, even Mr Devaraj Urs, the Congress(U) president, and Babu Jagjivan Ram, the aspirant for that post, started sending feelers. Babuji went to the extent of informing Mrs Gandhi through an industrialist friend of his that he would not at all mind accepting Mr Rajiv Gandhi's leadership!

But none of them found any sign of welcome. Mr Rajiv Gandhi's friends encouraged, mildly, Mr Rajni Patel and Mr S. S. Ray; they gave the two leaders hopes, and even now are telling them not to be totally despondent. Some Congress(U) leaders are also being allowed to peep in through the door, but they were not allowed to enter. More than anyone else, Mrs Gandhi knows the character of these leaders. As long as she is in power she can play upon their greed; they will not hesitate to swallow any humiliation to join the ruling party, because they cannot live without power for very long. She is utilising their avarice to destroy the Congress(U). Her overtures to Mr Y. B. Chavan, Mr Sharad Pawar, Mr A. K. Antony, Mr P. R. Das Munsi all have this objective.

The Congress(U), true, is not a major political force in the country. But in some states it still has a few leaders left who can be of some use to her. For example, Mr Y. B. Chavan and Mr Pawar together can still cause trouble for the Congress(I) in Maharashtra. However, if they can be separated, the Congress(I) CM of Maharashtra becomes a much more relieved individual. In Kerala, Mr Antony can either directly help her dislodge the CPI(M)-led United Front government or his political vacillation can expedite the disintegration of the Congress(U) in the state, which would also be a blow to the state government. And Mr Das Munsi can still be of some use in building up an anti-Left Front movement in West Bengal.

Accordingly, a dialogue was opened with all of them. Mr A. R. Antulay's services were utilised to tempt Mr Pawar and, through the latter, Messrs Antony and Das Munsi. And Mr Vasantrao Patil started talking to Mr Chavan. If the real intention was to bring both Mr Chavan and Mr Pawar into the Congress(I), then the same person would have been entrusted with the job of inviting them both. But the real objective was to create a rift between the *guru* and the *chela* in Maharashtra. And whatever Mr Chavan may say in public, the game has succeeded to a large extent—he and Mr Pawar are not the chummy twosome they were till not very long ago. Moreover, Mr Chavan's decision to quit the Congress(U) unilaterally has put the entire party in complete confusion. Finally, I doubt if Mr Chavan, after he joins the Congress(I), will be given any important position. At best, he may be allowed to be the Kamlapati Tripathi of 1981.

Babuji informed Mrs Gandhi through an industrialist friend that he would not at all mind accepting Rajiv Gandhi's leadership.



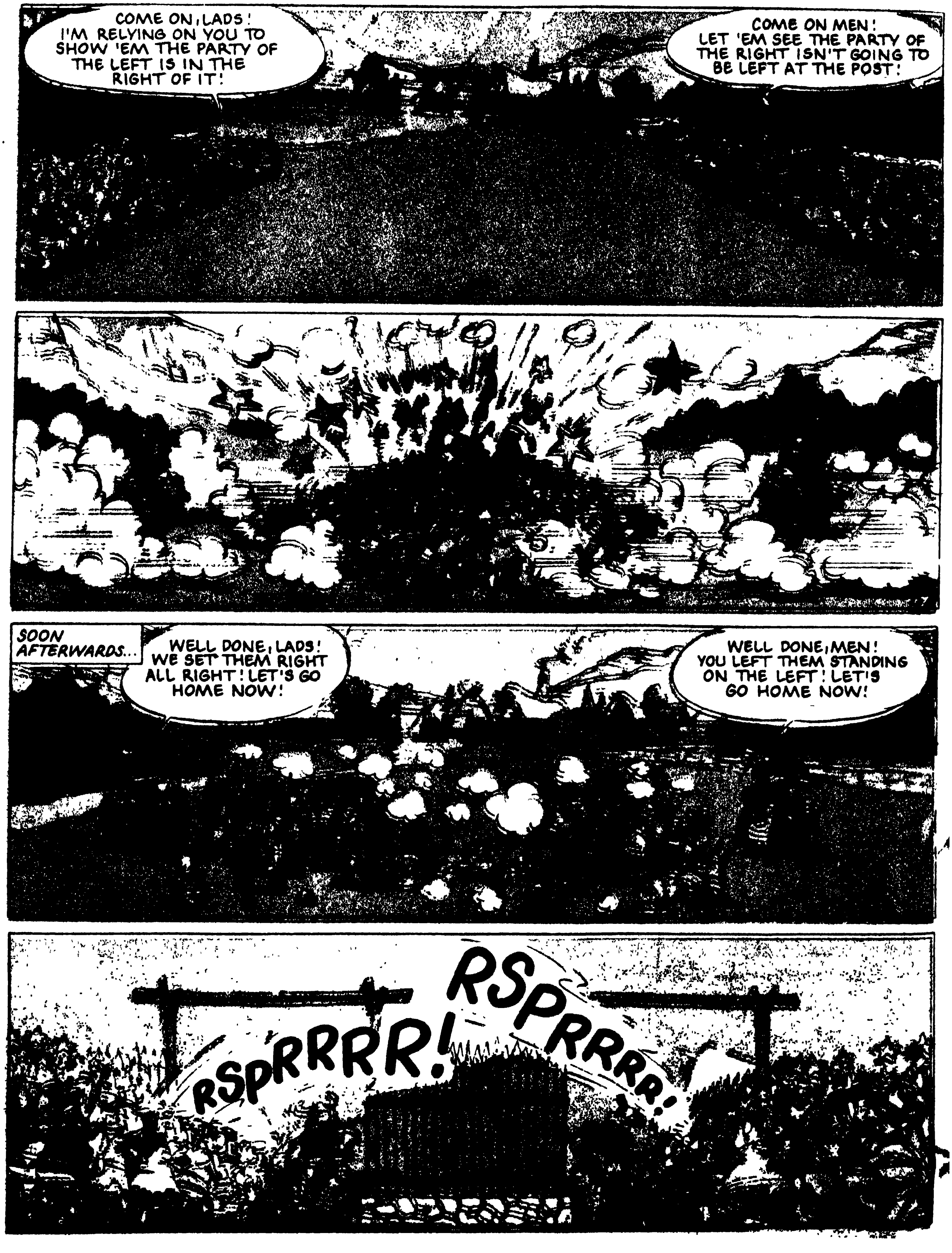
Inspite of its limited influence, the Congress(U) could have played a major role in forging a left and democratic front in India. It had some prominent leaders—without much following, but at least their names were known all over the country. The communists were keen to utilise these names, and also eager to get the services of Mr Charan Singh through Mr Limaye for this front. But thanks to the Chaudhury's egotism and Mrs Gandhi's manipulation, the front has come to a premature end. Congress(U) leaders are in no position today to take any political initiative; their credibility has been seriously damaged, if not destroyed. And, the leftists will have to proceed now on their own steam. On top of all this, both the CPI(M) and the CPI have their internal troubles. The CPI(M) is busy trying to save the three state governments in which it shares power, and the CPI is anxiously trying to protect its house from Mr Dange's onslaught. (Of course, Mr Dange is being aided and abetted by Mrs Gandhi.)

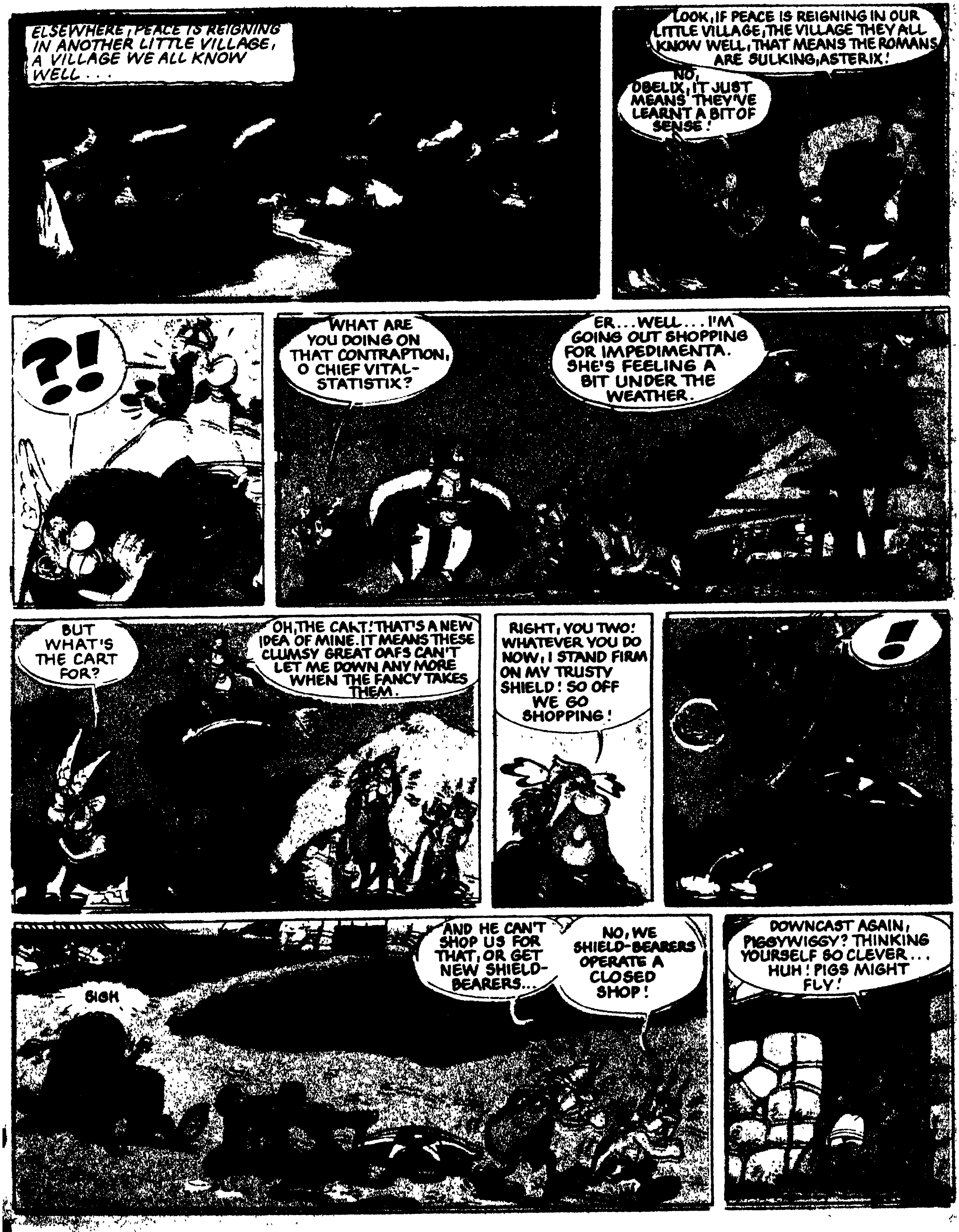
Whatever political leaders may think about her, Mrs Gandhi remains the saviour—in the eyes of the poor everywhere, except for West Bengal, Kerala and to some extent Tamil Nadu. Even in 1977 many of them stood by her. She has today the solid support of more than 35 per cent of the electorate, and more than 75 per cent of this 35 per cent is composed of the poor. She cannot afford to lose their support. If the leftists can make inroads into the Hindi heartland of the country, they would pose the first serious threat to the hegemony of the Nehru family on this vote. Mrs Gandhi, therefore, would always be more anxious to scuttle any move to form a major left and democratic front in the country, as their primary appeal would be to the core of her own vote. This time she has done it by decimating the Congress(U) and playing up the Dange factor; next time she may have some other trick up her sleeve.

I have repeatedly asserted, and would like to emphasise again, that no one who can create any *jhanjhat* (trouble) for Mr Rajiv Gandhi in the future will be given a position of power in the Congress(I) or in any of its governments. Mrs Gandhi can have no desire to leave her son a prey to a pack of wolves after her departure from the scene.

Asterix AND THE GREAT DIVIDE

written and illustrated by Uderzo


COME ON, LADS! I'M RELYING ON YOU TO SHOW 'EM THE PARTY OF THE LEFT IS IN THE RIGHT OF IT!
COME ON MEN! LET 'EM SEE THE PARTY OF THE RIGHT ISN'T GOING TO BE LEFT AT THE POST!
SOON AFTERWARDS...
WELL DONE, LADS! WE SET THEM RIGHT ALL RIGHT! LET'S GO HOME NOW!
WELL DONE, MEN! YOU LEFT THEM STANDING ON THE LEFT! LET'S GO HOME NOW!
RSPRRRRR!
RSPRRRRR!


ELSEWHERE, PEACE IS REIGNING IN ANOTHER LITTLE VILLAGE, A VILLAGE WE ALL KNOW WELL . . .
LOOK, IF PEACE IS REIGNING IN OUR LITTLE VILLAGE, THE VILLAGE THEY ALL KNOW WELL, THAT MEANS THE ROMANS ARE SULKING, ASTERIX!
NO, OBELIX, IT JUST MEANS THEY'VE LEARNT A BIT OF SENSE!
?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THAT CONTRAPTION, O CHIEF VITALSTATISTIX?
ER . . . WELL . . . I'M GOING OUT SHOPPING FOR IMPEDIMENTA. SHE'S FEELING A BIT UNDER THE WEATHER.
BUT WHAT'S THE CART FOR?
OH, THE CART! THAT'S A NEW IDEA OF MINE. IT MEANS THESE CLUMSY GREAT OAFS CAN'T LET ME DOWN ANY MORE WHEN THE FANCY TAKES THEM.
RIGHT, YOU TWO: WHATEVER YOU DO NOW, I STAND FIRM ON MY TRUSTY SHIELD! SO OFF WE GO SHOPPING!
!
SIGH
AND HE CAN'T SHOP US FOR THAT, OR GET NEW SHIELD-BEARERS...
NO, WE SHIELD-BEARERS OPERATE A CLOSED SHOP!
DOWNCAST AGAIN, PIGGYWIGGY? THINKING YOURSELF SO CLEVER . . . HUH! PIGS MIGHT FLY!

'Ban tobacco in Amritsar!'

After Khalistan, this is a new cry

Amritsar: In the sweltering heat of the noonday sun on Sunday 31 May, thousands of slogan-shouting Sikhs assembled at Manjisahib. They were armed: some had their swords, others spears and guns. And they had come to start their much-publicised anti-smoking campaign march. The 2.5 km-long march to Rambagh just outside the walled city of Amritsar was led by the blue-turbaned Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Extensive police arrangements all along the route had been made, particularly to ensure that the terrified *paan-biri* (betel and cigarette) shop owners were left in peace. They had, in any case, taken the sensible precaution of keeping the shops closed. Fear and tension had gripped the holy city ever since the Akali extremists decided to campaign against the sale of tobacco and intoxicants, forbidden by Sikh religious law.

But the slogans soon passed beyond tobacco to Khalistan: *"Khalistan Zindabad! Ley ke rahenge Khalistan* (Long live Khalistan! We are determined to have Khalistan)" and *"Jo hamse takrega, tukrey tukrey ho jayega* (Anyone opposing us will be cut to pieces)." And at every slogan, the guns, the spears and the swords, now unsheathed, were brandished. Although, according to the police, the procession passed off peacefully, there were stray incidents of violence.

Afterwards, the district administration promulgated Section 144. However, the tension continued till the next day and the chief minister had to announce preventive measures: holders of semi-automatic rifles and revolvers were ordered to surrender their arms for a month within three days. And the chief minister announced a public meeting on 6 June where major leaders from all parties would appeal for peace and communal harmony.

It is interesting that the anti-smoking campaign has followed on the heels of the soon-aborted Khalistan agitation. Equally interesting is the emergence of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, whose name figured in the FIR in connection with the murder of the Nirankari Baba. He was not arrested in that case although everyone knew he had taken refuge for some months in the Golden Temple.

The demand for the ban on tobacco and intoxicants was first raised by the All-India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF), which is an extremist organisation without much of a following. The cry, however, was then taken up by the Longowal Akali Dal searching for causes, and other Sikh organisations. Following up their demand, AISSF members and some Nihangs went around the Golden City forcing cigarette sellers to stop the sale of cigarettes and *biris*. This campaign climaxed with the 31 May procession.

When the Sikhs announced their plans for a procession, the Arya Samajists retaliated by organising a procession in Amritsar in the last week of May supporting the sale of tobacco and intoxicants. Communal tension increased. And the Sikhs decided to display their force in the procession and mobilised heavily.

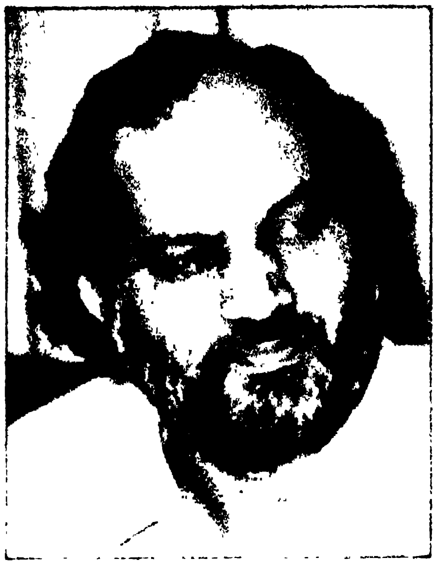
Inevitably, there is politics in the problem. The two Akali factions (the moderates led by former chief minister Prakash Singh Badal and the hardliners led by Talwandi) are fighting for both public sympathy and the support of religious leaders. The hardliners are obviously interested in stoking fires—that is the only way they know to keep alive.

Satish Kumar

SPACE PROGRAMME

Military missiles are far away

Trivandrum: The 13 years of dedicated work by the scientists of the Indian Space Research Organisation's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) at Thumba near here has made India the seventh country in the world with the capability of putting a sattelite into orbit around the earth with its own rocket. Starting with almost toy-rocketry (the first rocket fired from Thumba in 1969 weighed only seven kgs), India has come a long way to fire a 17-tonne rocket with a 35-kg payload into an orbit around the earth. If the present pace of progress is kept up, then by 1986, India will be able to develop the Polar Self-Launching Vehicle (PSLV), which would weigh 350 tonnes and put a 600-kg satellite into a sunsynchronous orbit around the earth. In terms of time taken by the Indian scientists, the 13 years from 1967 to 1980 (when the first experimental flight of the SLV-3 was carried out successfully) compares well with the rocketry development programmes of other countries. Japan, for instance, took 15 years, from 1955 to 1970. And Britain, bugged by the high rate of failures and the costs of the project cried off (Britain prefers to buy American rockets to launch its satellites than make its own now). India, in fact, is among the six successful rocket-manufacturing nations today, the others being the USA, the USSR, France, Japan and China.



Vasant R. Gowariker

What could the military uses be of the successful developmental launch of the Rohini RS-1 satellite atop the SLV-3 rocket at 09:03: 46 hours of 31 May 1981 from Sriharikota? Speculation is rife that India now has the capability to develop intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM). When this reporter put this question to the director of the VSSC, Dr Vasant R. Gowariker, during an informal chat at Trivandrum in early May, the bearded scientist shrugged his shoulders and said, "We have only been asked to put a satellite into orbit. Whether India will develop IRBMs or not, is not a decision which we here at the VSSC can take. But at present we have a limited capacity to produce two SLV rockets in a year. Our main preoccupation is to produce augmented SLVs, with higher payload capabilities and ultimately launch the PSLV in 1986."

The successful launching of the SLV-3, of course, does give India the capability to develop an IRBM. All that has to be done is that the fourth stage of the SLV-3 rocket and the Rohini satellite has to be replaced by a 400-kg warhead. The three initial stages of the SLV-3 type rocket has the capability of sending a warhead to targets as far as 5,000 kms. But with the present rate of production at the VSSC, it seems unlikely that India will be able to go in for military uses of its achievements in rocketry in the near future.

Nevertheless, the first developmental flight of the SLV-3 is a

The SLV-3 rocket

major achievement of the scientists of the VSSC. In the field of rocketry, there has been no international exchange of information. The rockets produced by the VSSC, therefore, are genuinely *"swadeshi."* There is, however, cooperation between India and the USSR, as well as the USA, in the field of space research, but in the specialised field of rocketry, the team formed by the late Dr Vikram Sarabhai, now led by Dr Gowariker, has had to go it alone.

Almost a lakh indigenous components have been used in the SLV-3. Many public sector and private sector organisations across the country were involved in the SLV-3 project and each of them can be proud of the fact that they played a role in the successful programme of the VSSC. The vehicle subsystems were made by the VSSC itself. The gyrocomponents were made at the Kalamassary unit of the Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT). The mandrels came from a Satara firm, Cooper. Larsen and Toubro of Bombay and W.I.L. of Walchandnagar provided the rocket motor hardware. The Bangalore, Nasik, Kanpur and Lucknow units of the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) provided the interstages, fasteners, rocket motor cases, guidance components and actuators. The end domes and the winding mandrels came from a Coimbatore firm, Everest. Prabhakar Products of Madras made the transporter and the fixtures. Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels Ltd of Vishakhapatnam manufactured the proof motors. Some forgings came from RFC, Hyderabad. The insulation moulding was done by the Bhopal unit of the Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. The steel sheets came from the Durgapur and Rourkela plants of the Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL). The launcher was made by Richardson Crudass of Bombay. A Calcutta firm, Prasun, made the mandrel tefloning. Motor cases were made by Anup, Ahmedabad. The Heavy Engineering Corporation of Ranchi, the whitest of the public sector white elephants, also played a role—along with ordnance factory at Muradnagar and HAL's Nasik unit. Together, they provided heat treatment facilities for the rocket project. In short, the launch of the Rohini RS-1 atop the SLV-3 on 31 May was a fine demonstration of Indian scientific and technological might.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

MEDIA

Was the reporter a cheat?

Trivandrum: This has been a cruel year for journalism—as far as awards are concerned. There was the Pulitzer Prize fraud in the USA for the *Washington Post* story on the eight-year-old drug addict, Jimmy; now Kerala provides an indigenous example. The Sivaram Award has been newly-instituted by the Trivandrum Press Club for the best news story of the year from Kerala. Named after one of India's great journalists, the late Mr M. Sivaram, the award carries a cash prize of Rs 1,000 and a citation which reads: "It's not the money but the recognition which is every journalist's dream, which counts."

Among the 19 entries nominated to the three-member jury comprising former chief minister Mr C. Achuta Menon, Kerala University vice-chancellor Dr V. K. Sukumaran Nair, and Mr Ramachandran, a former journalist and member of the Public Service Commission, the winner seemed obvious: Mr V. K. Soman's story on the Trivandrum mental hospital which had appeared in the *Malayala Manorama*.

The story was about the dehumanising conditions in the hospital. According to Mr Soman, he had to devise ways to gain entry into the hospital wards, which were normally out of bounds to pressmen and visitors. The article dealt with the sexual exploitation of one of the female inmates, Magi, by those in charge. There was also a touching description of the stinking wards and mad patients who had been cured but had not been released.

Manorama, with more than five lakh buyers, used the story on the front page. A similar story, however, had appeared earlier. In 1979, two reporters from *Kerala Kaumudi*, Ms Kusumakumari and Ms Nalini, had managed to sneak into the hospital along with Mother Teresa, who was paying a surprise visit. They took photographs and for the first time pictures of the mental hospital and its semi-naked inmates were printed. The members of the jury, none of them media-watchers, did not know about the *Kaumudi* story. And that was not the end. Immediately after the *Manorama* report on the mad and

A triumphant Vakkam Purushottam presents the controversial Magi to the press

ROY JOSEPH

Abracadabra

The woman who made a fortune by telling others theirs...was flummoxed

The fragrance of joss-sticks filled the air

The luminous glow from the crystal ball sent crazy shadows scuttering across the room

She gazed long and deep into the mysterious depths of the orb and probed into her dream Was this what she had been missing out on all her life?

Thrills ran down her spine at what she saw Those handsome features. what a personality! Sudden glints here and there Oh what a magnificent presence! Suddenly, colours erupted dazzling reds, sunny yellows, the bluest of blues

The patterns swayed and changed. Three hazy initials flickered on and off, then became clearer VIP, they said

Holy macaroni! What was VIP?

Madame Zelda, expert in Purple Magic, possessor of the powers, the woman who had made a fortune by telling others theirs, was, for the first time in her life, flummoxed

Only Xplus could help her

Madame Zelda switched on the Tiffany lamps, sprinkled a bottle of Bordeaux around her, and clapped her hands thrice

In walked Solomon, on cue, licking his lips. He had just feasted on a snack of blinis topped with caviar and a twist of lime. Thoroughly content, fat and happy, Solomon thought he was the cat's whiskers He was, in fact, the cat.

"Solo! Take position! Xplus has to be invoked."

Solomon jumped on her shoulder, and both of them purred.

There was a sharp clap of thunder and a blinding light stood before them. Xplus had arrived

"Zee! It is I What is it you want from me old girl?"

"The image I keep seeing, Xplus I must know This VIP .. the shape... the colours I must possess one."

"Don't be an ass. VIP is only luggage. Surely, you don't want that?"

"I do, Xplus. When I saw those beautiful sleek lines, I knew there was nothing else in the world for me. Please produce one for me, I beg of you."

"Hmm. You do seem hooked, baby. Anyway, here we go..."

A VIP suddenly appeared from nowhere. Madame Zelda reached out for it but was stopped by a shout from Xplus.

"Wait! I did not say you could have it. First, tell me,.. would you give up your cars, estate and jewellery for it?"

"Yes, of course."

"That's interesting. OK, tell me. Would you give up Solomon for it?" Madame Zelda thought for a while, stole a glance at Solomon and said slowly, "Yes".

Solomon stuck his tongue out at her.

"Very very interesting Now, tell me my little boo-boo Would you, perhaps, give up your powers?"

Madame Zelda uttered a few invectives. Without her powers, what would she be? Nothing! But then, on the other hand, she could have everything, too!

"Yes", she shouted "Yes, yes I would give up my powers "

"Never have I seen so much love You can keep the VIP.. and your powers Your faith moves me... and now, I move on."

The light disappeared in a puff of smoke. Only the VIP sat there, waiting for Zelda.

She held it in her hands. Felt the smooth contouring, admired the shining chrome, lovingly dialled the numbers of the combination lock Opened it, and twanged the elasticised straps. .

It was hers. She possessed a VIP And VIP possessed her.

N.B. It has been necessary to conceal the identities of our customers, to protect their privacy. The VIP luggage range, however, maintains its actual identity in 57 countries around the world

Madame Zelda holding up her custom-built crystal ball, shaped like a paper-weight. "This is where I first saw... my VIP."

VIP

**Spells class.
Anywhere in the world.**

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V I P House, 88C Old Prabhadevi Road
Bombay 400 025

beautiful Magi, Kerala health minister Vakkam Purushottam took pressmen to the hospital and showed them who Magi really is—an old, frail woman. "Should I say anything more about the report?" asked the minister. It was evident that the report was fabricated.

It is even more surprising that the story of the mental hospital should have been given the award when the Marxist daily, *Deshabhimani*, scooped the spirit tanker seizure which led to the unearthing of the spirit scandal. But the decision of the jury was final. Mr K. C. John, president of the Press Club for the seventh year in succession, defending the award said: "*Kaumudi*'s story about the visit of Mother Teresa to the mental hospital is quite different from *Monorama*'s which tells about the people imprisoned under the guise of being mad." The award has only increased the mud-slinging among the journalists of the state capital. In a hard-hitting article in *Kalakaumudi*, the *Kerala Kaumudi* weekly, the correspondent who claims to have known Mr Sivaram personally, writes: "If Sivaram had been alive he would have simply whipped the members of the jury for having committed such a blunder."

Binoo K. John

MADHYA PRADESH

Vidya Nagar is demolished

Bhopal: On 28 May, two unauthorised settlements were demolished in Madhya Pradesh—one in Bhopal and the other at Raipur. While the demolition in Bhopal earned the blessings of the authorities the one at Raipur caused the anger of people and leaders of all political parties. The colony at Bhopal was a collection of tents of gypsies who indulged in crimes of every kind. Demolishing their colony was a blessing to the local people. But the Raipur demolitions were a different story altogether. Vidya Nagar, for that was the name of the colony of labourers and rickshaw-pullers, was demolished the very day Mr V.C. Shukla came back to his hometown for the first time after his resignation from the central cabinet.

Vidya Nagar colony had been in existence for a decade although its formal foundation was laid last year by an enthusiastic Congress(I) leader, Mr Shiv Shankar Shukla, who named it after Mr V.C. Shukla. The residents were unauthorised occupants but they hoped they would get *pattas* from the government in course of time. They were often served eviction notices but every time Mr Shiv Shankar Shukla stepped in with his request to the authorities to forget the eviction notices and instead give the houseowners *pattas*. The authorities finally decided that the colony would not be disturbed. However, there would be a restriction on further encroachments: all houses erected after 31 December 1980 would be demolished. The Vidya Nagar colony inhabitants were agreeable to this order.

The situation was too good to last long. A few months ago, some very influential people formed the Hanuman Nagar housing cooperative society and applied for allottment of land in Vidya Nagar. The society had no difficulty in securing clearance from the authorities although it is a fact that the collector of Raipur, Mr Ajit Jogi, was not in favour of the scheme. Later, even the CM issued orders that no land should be transferred to the Hanuman Nagar society nor must the existing houses in the Vidya Nagar colony by demolished.

However, with the factionalism within the Congress(I) in the state, bureaucrats tend to support the different groups. In this instance, the revenue secretary, with the support of some Congress(I) leaders, overruled the CM's orders. The demolition operations were planned for 27 May, to the joy of the anti-V.C. Shukla group in the state.

What happened during the demolition varies from mouth-to-mouth. The police say they started demolishing the houses built after the cut-off date. But the residents of the 79 huts say that police did not follow the orders and started demolishing all the houses. In the melee that followed, many people were hurt, mostly in the police lathi-charge.

Whatever it is, Vidya Nagar today is a heap of debris. All the 79 families who live below the poverty line have not only lost their houses but also their utensils and whatever little they had. All this because some officials, with the backing of politicians wanted to oblige some influential persons.

M.V. Kher

Demolished houses of Vidya Nagar

FOREIGN RELATIONS

'India is anti-Muslim'—Saudi Ambassador

New Delhi: Just two years ago, a highly unreliable and provocative statement made by the then Moroccan Ambassador to New Delhi about the plight of Muslims in India had sparked off waves of indignation in the country. Hasty press releases from both the Indian and Moroccan sides in explanation and defence of the statement were subsequently issued, and the matter subsided with the Ambasador's departure. A similar denigrating statement made recently by the Saudi Arabian Ambassador Shiekh Saleh Al-Sugair has, however, escaped public notice, thanks mainly to the ministry of external affairs.

In a recent interview to *Al-Madina*, an Arabic daily published from Jeddah, the Saudi Ambassador has alleged that despite the secular nature of the Indian Constitution, Muslims in India are prevented from practising their religion. The interview, which was taken at New Delhi by correspondent Abdul Rashed Andi-Jaani, received front page coverage with a highly slanderous title, "Negative attitude of the Indian authorities towards anti-Muslim activities," in the newspaper's 2/3 April 1981 edition. It quotes the Ambassador as saying: "Zionist organisations and anti-Muslim elements in India" were attempting to plant suspicion about his government's intention in its "mas-

Case kiss ka

Bombay: "I think this whole thing is very foolish." That was Mrs Kohlapure reacting to a newspaper report which mentioned that a warrant of arrest had been issued against her second—and most famous—daughter, the film actress, Padmini. "We have not received any summons from the court in this matter. So where is the question of eluding the summons? A warrant of arrest can be taken out only after it has been established that the summons have been served," she explained.

The summons and warrant of arrest were issued after filmstar Padmini Kohlapure kissed crown Prince Charles of Britain on his left cheek during the Prince's recent visit to a film studio of the city. The kiss was enough ammunition for Mr Ansar Anand of Meerut, a self-appointed moralist, who in a fit of righteous indignation filed a case in court charging that "Miss Kohlapure had marred the image of Indian women in the eyes of the world and she ought to be punished in a court of law for obscenity." Obviously, Mr Anand's attitude to women is based on the "*Bharat ki pavitra nari*" concept as portrayed in Indian films.

"I cannot understand this commotion," said Mrs Kohlapure. "My daughter is a minor. (Padmini is only sixteen.) The whole thing has been blown out of proportion just because Padmini is a filmstar. Probably this fellow is out for some cheap free publicity for himself." Mrs Kohlapure continued, "My daughter does not know this man. Neither has she received a fan letter from him. At first when we heard that there was a court case against Padmini we were really worried. But when the summons didn't arrive we began viewing it as a joke."

Padmini Kolapure

DURGAPRASAD

"Why should my daughter be the only one to be arrestedWhy don't they arrest Prince Charles? He kissed her also didn't he? Besides, Padmini was not the only one to smooch the royalty. There were other girls also who kissed him. Why aren't they being dragged to court?" queried Mrs Kohlapure.

Padmini who made her debut in Raj Kapoor's *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* has climbed the ladder of success in a very short span of time. This year she won the best supporting actress award for her role in *Insaaf ka Tarazu*. In the latter film there were two identical rape scenes, the first involving Zeenat Aman and the second Padmini. Ms Kohlapure excelled in her scene. Padmini has shown that she is not averse to baring herself "provided the story demands it." *Gehrayee* and *Insaaf ka Tarazu* are two examples. But according to lawyers the suit will be dismissed. Said a well-known advocate: "If it doesn't, there will be problems. Aren't our films full of those 'kiss on the cheeks' scenes. In that case all our stars will be in court." At the moment, Padmini Kohlapure is abroad shooting for Raj Kapoor's *Prem Rog* starring Rishi Kapoor, quite unware of the frenzy she was stirred.

Haresh Munwani

sive aid" programme to "Muslims and Islamic institutions in India." And regarding "these problems, the attitude of the Indian authorities is negative."

The interview ends with the disclosure that "a number of threats of assassination and kidnapping of his family members had been received by him (the Ambassador). The last threat was because of his participation in a political seminar titled "How do you look at the future?" In the seminar, which was attended by a number of Ambassadors in India, he had spoken on the problems of subjugation of Arab rights (sic) and the Zionist challenge." The interview was reproduced in the 9 April edition of a Qatar magazine, *Al-Arubia*.

The Ambassador, Shiekh Al-Sugair, was not available for comments though he is in New Delhi and repeated attempts to contact him were made at the embassy and his residence (currently a deluxe suite at the Ashoka hotel). Reliable sources spoke of the Ambassador's strict instructions that queries on the subject were not to be entertained because "we want to forget" it.

India's embassies at Saudi Arabia and Qatar failed to report the publication to the ministry of external affairs. However, if it is to be assumed that the news did reach South Block, then in all probability, it was hushed up in fear of oil-power.

Whatever may be the truth, it needs to be investigated. But it is certain that if the Saudi Ambassador's opinion is a reflection of his government's, then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi's conclusion that "goodwill and friendship" towards India is everywhere, is certainly an exaggeration if not totally incorrect. The entire episode smacks of relative hostility towards India and augurs poorly for the much publicised Indo-Arab friendship. It may be a coincidence that the interview preceded the visit of Prince Saud Al-Faisal Ibn Abdul Aziz, the Saudi foreign minister, to this country.

The probable arguments that may now be forwarded are that either the press has wrongly quoted the Ambassador or it is the opinion of an individual and not the government's. The options for remedy are therefore limited: either the Ambassador disowns the interview or the Indian government asks for his recall. Probably, the Ambassador who has spent a long time at New Delhi and is reportedly keen to return, gave the controversial interview with the aim of ensuring his recall. Whatever may have been the reasons that prompted him to depart from the diplomatic code of conduct, his action calls for censure. He should not have comented on the internal affairs of the host country, especially its secularism.

It would indeed be appropriate if leaders of the Muslim community in India convey their displeasure about the Ambassador remark.

Arunava Dasgupta

KERALA

Central ministers must "curb their tongues"

Trivandrum: Kerala's ruling Left Democratic Front wants a categoric assurance from the Prime Minister that the centre is not going to topple the Kerala ministry. The leaders of the coalition have been irked by recent statements made by the minister of state for home affairs, Mr Yogendra Makwana, which has created an impression that the centre is definitely going to intervene to push the Nayanar ministry out of power. What irritated CM Mr Nayanar and the others in the ministry was Mr Makwana's endorsement of the Congress(I) opposition's agitation to topple the ministry through a 1959-like liberation struggle.

This is not the first time that Mr Makwana was making such statements but what was very significant was that his statements coincided with the march to the Raj Bhavan organised by the opposition. During the march Mr K. Karunakaran said that his party—the Congress(I)—was out to topple the Nayanar ministry through a "people's struggle."

The ruling front is apprehensive; they feel that the struggle would be violent. The question, that is being asked, therefore, is: is it proper for an union minister to openly support the agitation against a non-Congress government? According to Mr Nayanar, the whole move was unconstitutional. Further Mr Makwana had mentioned that the state's Governor would report on the Kerala situation to the centre. In doing so, said the CM, Mr Makwana was directly pressurising Governor Mrs Venkatachalam, to send a report. This would help the centre to intervene in the state. Mr Makwana's statement, however, has helped: it has made the coalition front partners to stand united against the centre's intervention.

Although Mrs Gandhi and other central ministers, like Mr Vasant Sathe, had stated openly that the centre had no desires of toppling the Kerala ministry, there are reports that the Prime Minister wanted Mr Karunakaran to create a suitable atmosphere in Kerala for the centre to intervene. The ministry has openly said that it was going to oppose central intervention on the alleged breakdown of law and order in the state. According to the convenor of the ruling front, the law and order situation in some of the Congress(I) ruled states was worse. He pointed out that Gujarat, Mr Makwana's state, was in turmoil with atrocities against harijans. And in Delhi, there was no security to life and property. If Mrs Gandhi was serious about what she has been saying all along, about not toppling the non-Congress(I) governments, she should ask her ministers like Mr C. M. Stephen and Mr Yogendra Makwana to "curb their tongues."

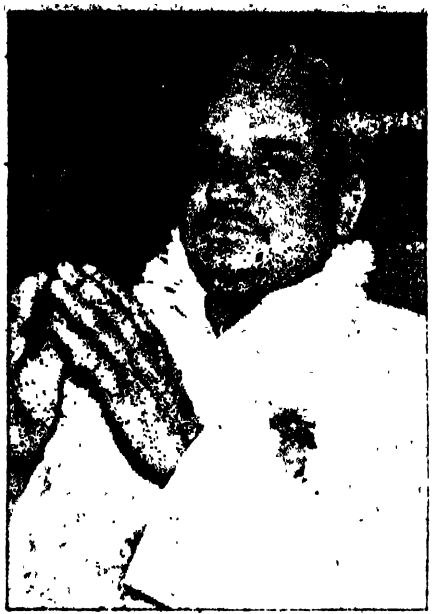
G. S. Kartha

HARYANA

Bhajan Lal gives cash, gold

Chandigarh: Adampur, hardly 40 kms from Hissar, is the home of the state chief minister, Mr Bhajan Lal. On 17 and 18 May, it was the venue of a massive gathering. The occasion: the marriage of three sons and one daughter of Mr Pokhar Mal, a small-time politician, businessman and "*dharambhai*" (initiated by the same guru) of the chief minister. The entire cabinet along with the state governor, a number of legislators and highly-placed officials were there to attend the marriage. According to reliable reports there were nearly ten thousand people. And the government machinery was at hand to facilitate arrangements. Artistes from the state's public relations department for instance, there, entertained the guests. Several officials, on the express orders of the chief minister, had been assigned duties to supervise the arrangements.

Were it not for Mr Balwantrai Tayal, a dissident Congress(I) legislator, the misuse of state machinery at a private marriage would have gone unnoticed. Mr Tayal told the press that senior officers attended the marriage and presented costly gifts presumably to please the CM. Mr Bhajan Lal himself is believed to have given one lakh rupees in cash to each of the grooms, and a heavy gold chain (weighing eleven *tolas*) to Mr Mal's daughter. Where did the money come from?



Bhajan Lal

On 26 May, a week after the marriage, Mr Tayal publicly asked Mrs Gandhi to make enquiries about the gifts. Immediately, Mr Bhajan Lal issued an official denial. He said Mr Tayal was telling lies. The allegations were baseless, frivolous and slanderous, said the chief minister. Mr Bhajan Lal also claimed that Mr Pokhar Mal was no longer his business partner, though he did mention that he regarded Mr Mal as his own brother. Mr Tayal, however, reiterated his charge and said that the tour programmes of the deputy commissioners and other senior officials bore testimony to his allegations. More, the chief minister himself had not denied the presentation of the eleven-*tola* gold chain or the presentation of a lakh rupees to each bridegroom.

Satish Kumar

ANDHRA PRADESH

The witch hunt against policemen continues

Hyderabad: The Kotha Das incident (SUNDAY 24 May) which had rocked the twin cities of Hyderabad-Secunderabad on 28 April and sparked a controversy involving the state home minister, the then city police commissioner and the director-general of police, continues to haunt the city police. Exactly a month after the incident, the city police announced the suspension of Shapur N. Chenoy, former additional deputy commissioner of police (Special Teams) for his "role" in the Kotha Das episode.

A police spokesman claimed on 29 May that suspension of Mr S. N. Chenoy has been ordered pending an enquiry into "serious allegations of indiscipline and disobeying orders." The suspension orders, however, stated that Mr Chenoy had been placed under suspension "in public interest." The "serious allegations" include the leaking of the (first) interrogation statement of Kotha Das to the press where Das had reportedly claimed links with the state home minister, Mr K. Prabhakar Reddy. After the Kotha Das episode, including the subsequent denial of any links with the home minister, and the counter-allegations made against Mr Chenoy by Kotha Das in his (second) confessional statement, Mr Chenoy was transferred from his post as Additional DCP (Special Teams). Ch. Babu Rao took his place. Mr Chenoy however allegedly refused to abide by the orders in handing over charge to Mr Babu Rao. Afterwards, he went on leave. Further, he refused to join his duties as additional superintendent of police, Nizamabad district.

The former city police commissioner, Mr P. V. Pavithran, who was asked to go on three weeks' leave on 2 May after the Kotha Das incident and replaced by Mr C. G. Saldhana, also continues to be the odd man out. Mr Pavithran's leave expired on 23 May. It was decided by the state government to put him in charge of the vigilance cell of the civil supplies department as inspector-general. The decision to appoint him as director of the cell was, however, revoked and Mr Pavithran was asked on the night of 25 May by the CM, to extend his leave by a month.

Both Mr Pavithran and Mr Chenoy are facing privilege motions against them moved in the state assembly by some Congress(I) and opposition legislators. In their motion against Mr Pavithran, legislators N. Sreenivasula Reddy and B. Sitaramiah alleged that the former police commissioner had accused the legislators of collecting funds from anti-social elements at a public meeting in the city on 1 May. The privilege motion against Mr Chenoy was moved by legislators N. Narasimha Reddy and P. Janardhan Reddy.

An enquiry into the alleged press statements of Mr Pavithran and Mr Chenoy is being conducted by the state transport secretary, Mr Dilsukh Ram. Another enquiry is being conducted by the director-general of police, Mr M. V. Narayana Rao, into the entire "Kotha Das affair." Meanwhile, yet another enquiry officer is being appointed to conduct the disciplinary proceedings against the suspended Mr Chenoy.

Syed Majeedul Hasan

Funds for rural employment programme

Rs 90 crores is being disbursed by the centre to the states on a priority basis for financing various projects under the rural employment programme. The centre decided to release funds to the state governments following reports of stagnation in the implementation of various programmes aimed at improving the condition of people living in the rural areas—most below the poverty line. This scheme will provide jobs to people in rural areas and access to credit It will cover the entire country.

Aid for tribal farmers

The Bihar government has drawn up plans for increasing foodgrain production in tribal areas during the ensuing kharif season. Farmers will be given subsidy on certified and verified paddy seed at Rs 25 and Rs 20 per quintal respectively. Besides, they can buy seed paddy for Rs 250 a quintal instead of Rs 280 and will also be provided with Rs 1,000 per hectare for raising seedlings. Under the scheme, seedlings are to be raised in areas of over 105 hectares in Ranchi, 70 hectares in Palamau and 90 hectares in Singbhum. This scheme is to benefit tribal and harijan farmers.

Better bags for cement

A new bag for storing cement has been developed by the Cement Research Institute (CRI) which is cheaper than the bags used now and will also reduce the loss of cement during storage and carriage. The bags used now, made of heavy jute, not only permit seepage of cement but also allow moisture inside. The new bag is a sandwich of bitumen between two layers of hessain. The laminated fabric can be cut and stitched.

First bio-gas lit station

On 29 May the Usagal railway station on the Hubli Gadad section of south central railway became the first railway station in the country to be illuminated by bio-gas. The bio-gas is generated from human waste from the small railway colony situated near the station.

Scheme to encourage low cost cinema theatres

The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) will finance low cost cinema theatres to encourage its construction all over the country. According to the scheme, the NFDC will loan Rs 1,00,000 for every cinema theatre constructed in rural areas, Rs 3,00,000 for semi-urban areas and Rs 7,50,000 for urban areas. The loan, which is to be repaid in five years, is subject to a ceiling of 50 per cent of the total costs.

GOOD NEWS

SAIL production goes up

In the first two months of the current financial year, producion of saleable steel in the Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) plants have registered an increase of 32 per cent in production compared to that of the first two months of 1980-81. The production of saleable steel in the SAIL plants totalled 411,406 tonnes in May. The Bokaro Steel Plant established new monthly production records in ingots, hot-rolled coils and sheets and cold-rolled coils and sheets, while Durgapur plant produced 70,088 tonnes of steel. The Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) produced 44,497 tonnes of steel, marking an increase of 1,197 tonnes over last month's production.

A home for the mentally retarded

The Fellowship with Mentally Retarded (India) has established homes for the mentally retarded. Known as Asha Niketans, these institutions are small homes and workshops where mentally retarded men and women are provided work according to their capacities. The Asha Niketans are also homes where these mentally retarded people may stay all their lives if they wish. People from all walks of life voluntarily come to these homes to help the retarded. The inmates of the Asha Niketans eat, wash, live and even pray together. These homes help in healing the mentally retarded by letting them find confidence in themselves and making them feel that they are wanted and loved. The first home was founded at Bangalore in 1970 and with the encouraging response from the general people, another Asha Niketan has come up in Calcutta.

More vessels for small scale fisheries

The Bay of Bengal Programme of the FAO has launched a crash project to speed up the development of a suitable vessel for small scale fisheries in India and Sri Lanka. Nearly a dozen experimental boats are being built at the Royapuram boatyard of the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation (TNFDC) after an agreement was reached between the BOBP and the TNFDC. These include eight vessels for Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and two for Kerala. The main feature of the boats is that though they are motorised, they are beachable—capable of landing at the beach without expensive harbour facilities. The project which began two months ago aims at devising different types of boats to suit local conditions and fishing methods.

Drinking water for J&K villages

The J&K government is going to spend Rs 14 crores this year to provide drinking water to 300 villages with a population of two lakh persons. Of this Rs 7.97 crores has been earmarked for the Jammu division and Rs 2.73 crores for the Kashmir Valley.

Indian as ITU chairman

Mr. T. V. Srirangan, the wireless advisor to the Government of India has been re-elected as chairman of the finance committee of the administrative council of the International Telecommunation Union (ITU). This is his second term as the chairman.

Railways win big contract from Iraq

The Indian Railway Construction Company (IRCON) is going to construct a railway line in Iraq. The railway line will cover a distance of 80 kms from Samawa to Basrah. The contract for the construction of the track has been won against stiff competition and is worth about Rs 216 crores. The contract involves construction of 85 bridges including three major ones over the Euphrates river, 410 staff quarters, in addition to a railway station at Samawa, marshalling yards and sidings.

FCI bags a contract

The Fertiliser Corporation of India (FCI) and the Fertiliser (Planning and Development) India Ltd (FPDIL) have bagged a contract to organise and provide training facilities to fertiliser plant personnel in Turkey. This is the first time that such a contract has been signed by an Indian fertiliser undertaking for providing training abroad.

THE WORLD

Principles of an assassin

Turkish right-wing Fascist Mehmet Ali Agca (23) who fired three bullets into Pope John Paul II on 13 May this year, told the Italian police that he had planned to kill the "king" of England. "I went to London to kill the king," he confessed, "but I found he was a woman and decided against it because I am Turkish and a Muslim and I don't kill women." Later he told a Rome magistrate: "For the same reason I did not kill Simone Veil, President of the European Parliament." Agca claimed that he had also planned to assassinate UN secretary-general Kurt Waldheim but could not get hold of the necessary papers to enter the USA.

Mehmet Ali Agca

Search for 'lost' Americans

In the wake of threats to sponsor private search parties by the families of US military personnel 'lost' in the Vietnam war, the Pentagon finally sent a team of 30 Asian mercenaries to Laos in May this year The modus operandi was to check whether Americans are being held as slave labourers in a Laotian jungle camp. Earlier, satellite photographs of the camp in question had shown shadows on the ground that Pentagon experts believed were too big to be that of Asians. Though the Asian mercenaries, after extensive reconnaissance, have returned without any evidence, the Pentagon has not given up; according to a statement issued soon after the news of the mission leaked out, "the (US) government regularly, and with great care, had and will continue to check the validity of reports(on the whereabouts of US personnel)."

Wolf wants to prowl

Since Adolf Hitler's trusted deputy and now prisoner in an Allied jail in West Berlin, 87-year-old Wolf Rudolf Hess was permitted to attend a meeting of the 'Free Rudolf Hess Committee' in Augsburg (W. Germany) last month; the photograph shows Hess addressing the meeting.

Briefly

Discerning charity

"Please give this money to the poor, but not to the politicians or the rich," read the brief note which was found recently, along with six million yen (£13,166), in a bag at Tokyo railway station.

Homage with waste

Two hundred public lavatories are being constructed on the site of the demolished tomb of Reza Shah (father of deposed monarch Reza Shah Pehalvi) in Iran.

Detractor resigns

Osman Ahmad Osman has resigned as Egypt's deputy Prime Minister following the political storm over his autobiography in which he has hinted at the late President Nasser's malpractices (*World*, 17 May).

Base(less?) bill

President Kyprianou's Cypriot government has presented Britain with a bill for £183 million—the price for the latter's two sovereign bases at Akrotiri and Dhekalia in Cyprus.

Kiss does it again

Soon after Padmini Kohlapure was sued in court for not resisting her temptation to kiss Prince Charles, Nicholas Hardy (18) was thrown out of his Dean Close school hostel in Cheltenham (England) for kissing Lady Diana's hand while welcoming her to the school. Hardy's headmaster admitted. "I was jealous of what Nicholas did on that occasion . " But of course he added another excuse for banning the boy from his hostel: Hardy had been caught smoking in the dormitory in full view of everybody

Carving on hair

Xu Dalin (35), who works at an embroidery school in the east Chinese town of Suzhou, has carved five Chinese characters on a single strand of hair of a panda.

New 'worlds'

Iranian Prime Minister Rajai's latest, foreign policy divides the world into four categories: on the basis of countries 'brotherly,' 'friendly,' 'neutral' and 'hostile' to Iran.

Done and outdone

Los Angeles Times had both the first and the last words, and abstract artist Lee Waisler was at the receiving end. To begin with, the newspaper published a scathingly-critical review of his latest painting. And when in protest he dumped a pile of horse manure in front of *LA Times* headquarters claiming that the filth weighed five tons, the newspaper once again disagreed: according to its spokesman, it weighed only two tons.

Is there a cure for the 'Red Eye'?

It has many nicknames, including 'Joy Bangla'—because it first became an epidemic during the year of the Bangladesh crisis. S. URMILA MAJUMDAR describes this irritating disease, and says what, if anything, can be done about it

Gone are the days when the handkerchief and a pair of sunglasses signified fashion and summer. For ten years now, these have turned into indispensable accessories for combating a much-dreaded eye disease: conjunctivitis.

It was in the summer of 1971, shortly after the Bangladesh war. The Bangladesh refugees had started flowing in and, as though timing itself with the influx, there occurred the first cases of conjunctivitis. In the beginning, most victims were terrified, being totally ignorant about the existence of such a disease, and rumours were rampant that it could lead to blindness. In fact, however, it was part of the worldwide epidemic which assumed serious proportions in India during that year. Reports from the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta, show that as many as one million people were affected by the epidemic in 1971. With the coming of autumn, the intensity of the epidemic declined and by winter 1971, it had almost vanished from the country. The second wave of the disease appeared in the summer of 1975 followed by a third wave in the summer of 1979. The disease, however, did not assume the huge proportions it had achieved in 1971.

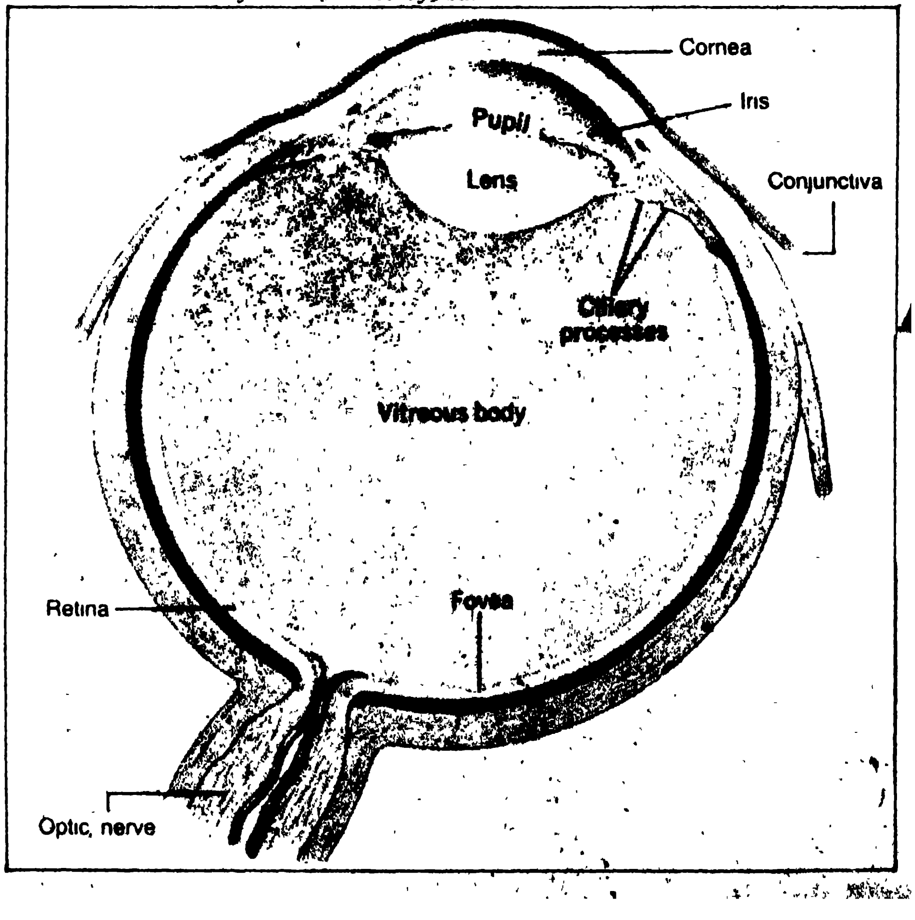
This year conjunctivitis has returned, and is almost as widespread as it was in 1971. However, unlike a decade ago, this time it is not a worldwide phenomenon, but is restricted to India. Till the last week of May, as many as 10,000 cases of conjunctivitis had been treated in Bombay's municipal dispensaries. In Orissa, according to Professor Kulamani Mishra of the eye department of Cuttack's S. C. B. Medical College and Hospital, on an average, more than 100 patients had come to the hospital daily for the treatment of conjunctivitis. These numbers do not obviously include the many who now treat themselves. The disease has taken its toll in other cities, including Calcutta, where large numbers of people can be seen moving around wearing dark glasses and clutching handkerchiefs.

What is this disease that people refer to as 'red eye'? Popularly known in eastern India as "Joy Bangla"—after its first appearance following the Bangladesh war—conjunctivitis is the inflammation of the delicate membrane, conjunctiva (see diagram), that lines the inside of the eyelids and the eyeballs. The conjunctiva forms a kind of sac around the eyeballs and is lubricated by the tear glands. This warm and moist texture of the sac makes it a good breeding ground for bacteria and other organisms and viruses, that lead to conjunctivitis. This probably explains why the disease appears only during the summer months in India (although it does not explain its sporadic occurance).

The disease can strike at any time during the day or night. It begins with a feeling of grittiness and discomfort. The eye slowly turns red, not because of a haemorrhage, but because of the inflammation of the capillaries around the eyeballs, and there is a discharge from the eye, which is at first watery and later turns slightly granular.

The conjunctivitis that has appeared in India intermittently since 1971 is suspected to be the viral form of conjunctivitis: *Kerato conjunctivitis*, which involves the cornea and occurs only in one eye. It is caused by a

The structure of the human eye. The conjunctiva gets inflamed causing discomfort and redness to the eyeball and the eyelid.



Medicines

With conjunctivitis once again taking the form of an epidemic, the need for antibiotics has grown. In most places, doctors prescribe antibiotic drops and ointments. In Calcutta, for instance, doctors have been prescribing Locula drops, terramycin and Renacol drops. However, most of these medicines are available only on the prescriptions of a medical practitioner.

type of virus indentified as adenovirus and is characterised by the feeling of a foreign particle in the eye, lessened transparency of the conjunctiva, and discharge, at first watery, and then acrid, becoming mucuous and gluing the eyelids together. The disease is contagious and usually takes seven or eight days to cure.

But not all types of conjunctivitis are caused by viruses. Some accompany diseases like measles, or are caused by tobacco, smoke or dust and are referred to as exanthematous conjunctivitis. Others are caused by exposure to the influence of certain chemicals, aniline dyes or prolonged use of atrophine, eserine or cocaine.

Perhaps the most serious type of the disease is gonorrheal conjunctivitis. It is similar to the conjunctivitis that occurs in new-born babies. Gonorrheal conjunctivitis is caused by the introduction into the eye of gonorrheal material. The cornea is in constant danger of ulceration and dangers of matting of the iris and the cornea exist too. The disease may become chronic and eventually may lead to the destruction of the eye.

However, no matter what is the grade or type of conjunctivitis, the following symptoms are present to a greater or lesser extent: intolerance of light which accounts for the sunglasses, increased secretion, and inflammation of the blood vessels. Not surprisingly, therefore, the treatment of almost all forms of conjunctivitis includes the need of cleanliness, antiseptic washes and protection from excess light and dust.

Speaking about the incidence of the disease in India, Dr I. S. Roy, director of the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology, said: "This time, although it is an epidemic, yet the crowd in the hospitals is not that much. Perhaps the people have learned from past experience and are practising self-medication. However, the hospital authorities are vigilant so far as the follow-up is concerned and they are ready to cope with the epidemic."

"The disease is not fatal or lethal," added Dr Roy. However, he pointed out that although the disease lasts for seven to eight days, "treatment should be followed up for another two weeks." Infection remains even after the apparent cure and discontinuation of the treatment might lead to further complications of the cornea. Statistics, however, reveal that only one out of 1,000 persons in India has so far had corneal ulceration, which is why Dr Roy is in favour of patients practising self-medication: "It shows that the public has been made health conscious," said Dr Roy.

Conjunctivitis, as an epidemic, has been known for over a decade. However, as of now, a cure has not been found. Preventive measures and palliatives, have been suggested by doctors, but methods for annihilating the virus is yet to be found. Antibiotics and steroids which are prescribed to combat the disease do not much help to cure it, though they do help the patient to bear it. Perhaps the fact that a person attacked by the disease is unable to build anti-bodies not only makes the person susceptible to future attacks, but also makes it difficult to develop a serum or vaccine to challenge the disease.

Some dos and don'ts

Conjunctivitis is contagious. This means that the virus that causes the disease does not fly in air. The disease occurs if the eye is touched with an object that carries the conjunctivitis virus. So, to prevent the disease, doctors have laid down some thumb rules:

- The fingers are most commonly applied to the eyes. Wash your fingers before touching your eyes.
- Do not apply unclean handkerchiefs or garments to your eyes. In addition, homeopaths recommend Argentina Nitrate 200 two to three times a week, to prevent the disease.

However, if you have already contracted the disease, then it is best to:

- Refrain from touching the uninfected eye with the finger that you have used for the infected eye.
- Wash your eyes with normal saline at least four to six times a day. Or if you don't have access to saline, use a glass of water with a pinch of salt in it.
- Segregate yourself and your personal belongings, like your towel, soap and clothes, as far as possible, from others.
- See a doctor of course, and get a prescription for an antibiotic ointment or drop, to hasten the cure. Homeopaths recommend the application of euphrasia drops for those who are already infected.

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EXTRACTS

How Mujib Was Killed

On 15 August 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, was assassinated along with his wife, two sons and grandson in a coup by some serving and cashiered junior army officers. Since then a lot has been written on why and how Mujib was killed. But the whole truth has not been revealed. We carry extracts from the latest book on the subject: Who killed Mujib? *(published by Vikas; price Rs 45). The author,* A. L. Khatib, *as a working journalist in Bangladesh at the time of the coup, had the advantage of a ring side view*

August 1975 was a transitional time in Bangladesh. Mujib was making radical administrative changes and adopting measures that would have a tremendous social impact. There was only one political party in the country now—the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL). BAKSAL on which all sections of the people, including the armed forces and the police, were represented, would be an integral part of the administration. The importance of bureaucrats would diminish when the Governors-designate of the districts took up their new offices on 1 September 1975. The army was to be split and made to join in productive work at the district level. It was a revolutionary step.

The evening of 14 August 1975 did not seem different from any other evening in August. Dacca University was preparing to welcome Mujib the next day.

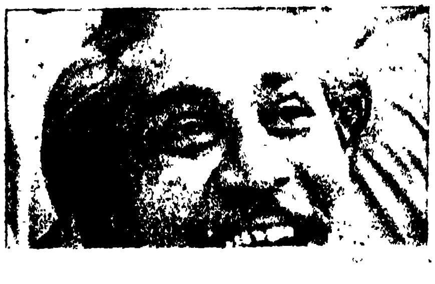
Mujib was arrested in March 1948, when he was a law student, for leading a black-flag demonstration against Jinnah on the highly emotional issue of making Bengali one of the two state languages. Mujib was arrested again next year for leading a strike of lower-grade university employees. When he was released, he found that he had in the meantime been rusticated from the university.

He would be visiting the university the next day as the chancellor.

Following the exploding of a hand grenade on the university campus, security arrangements for Mujib's visit to the university were tightened. Bomb blasts and grenade explosions had, ever since the Pakistani army's crackdown on Bengalis on the night of 25-26 March 1971, become almost a part of life in Dacca and did not disturb one's sleep. But there were rumours...

Kader Siddiqui, better known as Tiger (Bagha)Siddiqui for his exploits in the liberation war, was one of the Governors-designate. When he was going to the Post Graduate Hospital in Dacca to see his ailing mother on the evening of 14 August, he saw a tank near Karwan Bazar. There was another tank near the hospital, which is almost opposite the Radio Station. After seeing his mother, Kader drove down to Motijheel. Yet another tank: three tanks within a radius of one kilometre. He turned back. There was still another tank near the Engineers' Institute, hardly 200 metres from the hospital. It was a little past 11 pm. Kader Siddiqui drove on to the Mukti Bahini camp near Gano Bhaban in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Anwarul Alam Shahid, deputy director of the Rakshi Bahini, told Kader Siddiqui that the Bengal Lancers had been authorised to take out three tanks. But why were there four tanks? Shahid said, "You may have seen one tank twice." Could be. Shahid was a former student leader and had fought in the liberation war. There was no reason to doubt what he said.

Tank manoeuvres were a Thursday-night routine and twice a month the Bengal Lancers and the Second Field Artillery held combined exercises.



Brigadier Jamil, the President's security chief, spent a restless night; his wife was ill, and he had to escort the President to the university in the morning. It was not a new duty for him, but he was very uneasy. He had been appointed director of the Field Intelligence Unit, but handing over charge of the Unit to him had somehow not been completed still. Jamil's wife asked him to go to sleep. "I can't sleep," he said.

Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed too spent a sleepless night. There were a number of visitors to 54 Agha Mashi Lane, Moshtaque's house in old Dacca. One of the visitors was his nephew Major Rashid.

Taheruddin Thakur was like a cat on hot bricks that night. Any call would make him jump. He tried to calm his nerves with prayers. He had a bath and got ready as if he had to keep an appointment at an unearthly hour. A guest in the house wondered why Taheruddin was so tense.

Kamal, Mujib's son, came back home after midnight from the university campus, where last-minute touches were being given to the preparations to welcome Mujib.

At the same time finishing touches were being given to a plot at the Dacca Cantonment.

When it was still dark, Col. Farook addressed the Bengal Lancers, whom he had trained to hunt in killer packs. The Lancers in their black overalls were like the hordes of Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

Farook spat fire and venom. He said that Mujib had sold the country to foreign powers and was going to break up the army and disband the Lancers. He played on their fears and incited them in the name of Islam.

It was time to strike.

They moved out in three columns. Their targets were less than two kilometres away.

The houses of Mujib, his brother-in-law Abdur Rab Serneabat and his nephew Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni were surrounded simultaneously.

Soldiers started shooting at Mujib's house from all directions. Bullets were whizzing in through the windows on the first floor, where all the bedrooms were. A bullet grazed the hand of Sheikh Nasser, Mujib's younger brother.

They all took shelter in Mujib's dressing room, which was the least exposed. It was a repetition of 26 March 1971, when Pakistani troops had encircled the house.

Mujib rang up some officers.

Begum Mujib tore a strip from her sari and bandaged Nasser's hand.

Kamal came down and asked the guards to take action, but they had been 'neutralised.' While Kamal was still trying to persuade the guards to act, Major Huda entered the house with some men. The guards saluted him.

One of the men with Huda shot Kamal.

Meanwhile, Brigadier Jamil was

[illegible]

hurrying to Mujib's house. When his jeep was only a few hundred metres from Mujib's house, some soldiers who were waiting near Subhan Bagh mosque barked: "Halt." Jamil identified himself. They knew who he was; they had been posted there to intercept him. "We have orders to shoot anyone who passes this way," they threatened. When Jamil did not heed their warning, they shot him.

Soldiers were by then swarming all over Mujib's house. They found a room closed on all sides—it was Rehana's bedroom. They forced a door open, sending a cupboard full of things crashing to the floor.

"Let me see what they want," Mujib said and came out of the room as he had done on the night of 26 March, 1971. He had faced the Pakistani soldiers. These were his own men.

Mujib was wearing a checked *lungi* and a white *kurta*.

Mujib met Huda on the staircase. "It is you. What do you want?" Mujib asked. "We have come to take you," Huda said. "Do you think it is fun?" Mujib thundered. "I will not allow the country to be ruined." Huda was unnerved. A servant cried: "Kamal *Bhai* is dead." Havildar Moslemuddin, who was coming down from the terrace, swore and opened fire from behind with an automatic weapon, riddling Mujib's body with bullets.

Soldiers were picking up whatever they could. "Take whatever you want but don't kill us," Begum Mujib pleaded. But hearing the burst of firing, she came out. "You have killed him, kill me," she wailed. She was silenced for ever.

Jamal, his wife Rosy, and Sultana, Kamal's wife, were still in the dressing room. A burst from a sten gun and the three were dead.

The gunmen found Nasser in a bathroom and shot him.

Russell was cowering in a corner. "Take me to my mother," he whimpered, "We will take you to your mother," one of the homicidal maniacs said. A police officer pleaded for Russell's life: "He is only a child." The officer was killed. One arm of Russell had been shot off, yet he begged: "Don't kill me, don't kill me." The answer was a bullet.

Russell lay dead by his mother's side. Farook and Rashid were late in reaching Mujib's house. Farook went up to satisfy himself that all had been killed. He telephoned someone.

Sheikh Moni rang up for help, but no help was forthcoming.

Moni came to the drawing room to meet the army men who had already forced their way into his house. When they were about to shoot Moni, his wife Arzoo darted across the room to him. "Move aside," a soldier barked and opened fire.

Husband and wife fell together.

Moni died instantaneously, but there was still life in Arzoo. "Give me water," she gasped. "Mother, why are you and father lying on the floor?" Her three-year-old son Taposh asked. No answer. "Why don't you speak?" the little boy pleaded in bewilderment. Her maternal instinct was aroused. "Take me to a hospital. Save me. I have two little kids," Arzoo entreated. It was the final flicker, the last cry.

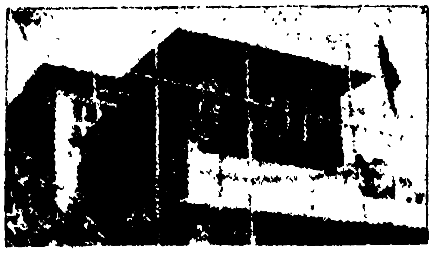
Sheikh Mujib with Khandaker (right, with cap)

Arzoo was expecting her third child.

When Serneabat found the soldiers had surrounded his house, he telephoned Mujib. Mujib said that he would ring back, Serneabat also rang up Sheikh Moni, his son-in-law. The telephone was ringing but there was no response from Moni's house.

Serneabat came down to the drawing room. His wife, children, nephew Shahid, guests and household assistants clustered round him—all except Abdul Hassanat, his son. Hassanat a freedom fighter, had barricaded the front door and in a desperate attempt to buy time, threatened to shoot anyone who approached the house, but it was a hopeless situation. He wanted to jump out of a rear window. There were soldiers everywhere. He was trapped. He waited in a dressing room with a revolver in his hand determined to kill at least one before being killed.

A groupled by Major Shariyar and Huda (who was not in the army) stormed into the house. "Let me speak to your commanding officer," Serneabat said. Shariyar replied, "We have no commanding officer. But who are you?" When Serneabat said who he was, a smile curled Shariyar's lips. The next moment Serneabat fell in a heap with bullet wounds. Hamida fell on her father with a piercing cry, trying to cover him. Bullets hit her on her hip and legs. Babu, Hassanat's baby son, cried in terror. Shahid lifted him up Both were shot There was wild firing. Others killed were Serneabat's 14 year-old daughter Baby, his nine-year-old son Arif and three guests.



Mujib's Dhanmandi residence

Serneabat's wife Amina, daughter Hamida, and son Khokan were wounded.

Nurul Islam Manjoor, a brother of Huda inspected Serneabat's house "Where is Hassanat?" he asked.

The killers had mistaken Serneabat's nephew Shahid for Hassanat.

A hunt was on for Hassanat.

The OC of the Ramna Thana sent Begum Serneabat, Hamida and Khokan to hospital.

The sound of firing brought an Indian diplomat living in the Dhanmandi area to his balcony. A neighbour, once a freedom fighter and now a successful businessman, was waiting tensely, expectantly, in his balcony only a foot away.

A rocket was fired. It was the signal that Operation Liquidation had been completed.

The freedom fighter turned businessman nodded as if he were acknowledging a greeting. Turning to the diplomat, he said with a smile, "It is all over. Switch on your radio."

It was 6.01 am.

The Dacca Radio was announcing that the armed forces had toppled the Mujib government. The announcer,

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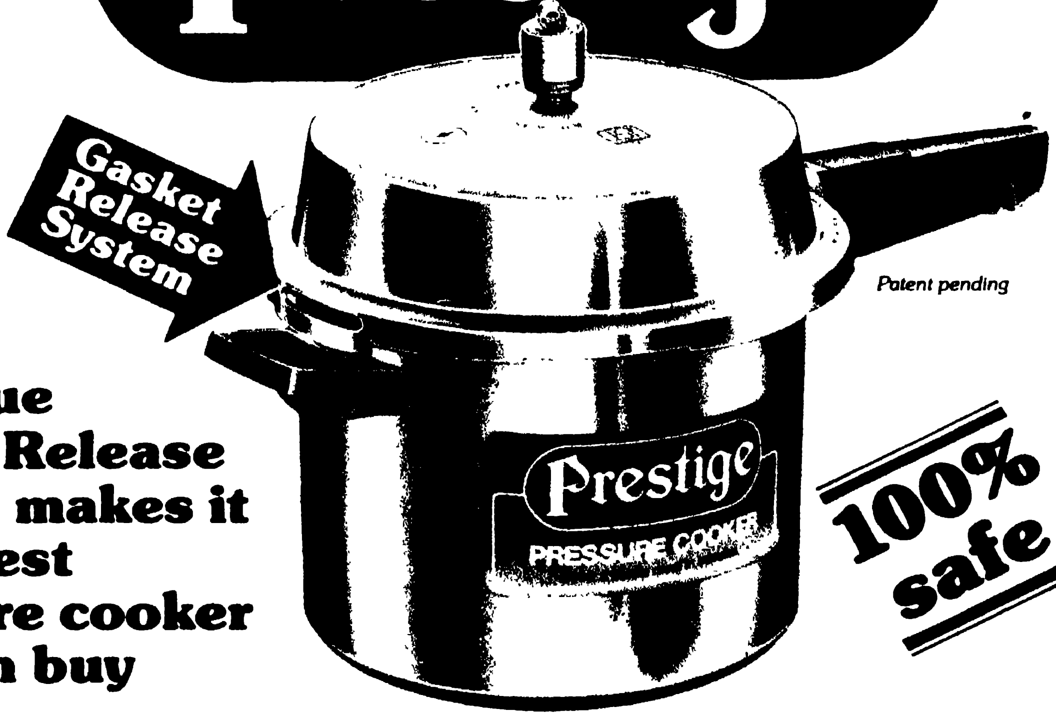

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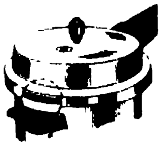

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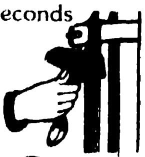

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who identified himself as Major Dalim, said: "Under the leadership of Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed the armed forces have taken over. In the greater interest of the country, this step has been taken. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been detained and his government has been toppled."

A subsequent announcement said: "The ousted President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed at his residence during the army take-over this morning."

They were breaking the news gradually.

"Wake up!" Kader's sister shouted. "There is a telephone call for you." Another sister of his was on the line. "There has been a coup," she said. "A coup?" he asked, uncomprehendingly. "Leave immediately. They would be coming for you any moment. Bangabandhu has been killed." The radio announcement came clearly through the telephone.

Kader Siddiqui left home carrying a hand-bag. His driver would not take him out. The man who had served him loyally for three years was refusing to drive the car in the hour of crisis, Kader thought. "Give me the car key," Kader told the driver. The driver did not respond; he came back with a neighbour's car and told Kader Siddiqui almost peremptorily, "Get in."

Ghazi Gulam Mostaffa, the Red Cross chief, scaled a compound wall and hid in a cattle-shed in his neighbourhood. He was on the verge of collapse. His neighbours did not have the heart to give him up, but it was dangerous to shelter him.

Deputies of Eugene Boster, the American ambassador, tried frantically to convey the news of Mujib's assassination to him, but he was not at home or at 'any of his normal haunts.' Where on earth could he be at six in the morning?

Rashid informed his uncle Moshtaque immediately that the mission had been completed. Yet when Rashid went with some soldiers to escort Moshtaque to the Radio Station, Moshtaque asked his nephew more than once: "Are you sure *he* is dead?"

The immediate reaction of a Padma boatman was: "No father's son can kill Bangabandhu."

An official in Moshtaque's ministry had told his wife, "Have you noticed Moshtaque's eyes? He has the eyes of a snake. Such a man can kill someone to get what he wants. I feel uneasy whenever I see him." His wife had laughed at his fears, but Moshtaque had become the President. What would happen now?

Snakes were baring their fangs.

Mahbudul Alam Chashi had disappeared from Comilla on 13 August. His colleagues at the Comilla Academy wondered where he could have gone without informing anyone. He popped up at the Dacca Radio Station on the morning of 15 August in the company of Moshtaque and Taheruddin Thakur.

Major Dalim

The unholy trio who had tried to abort the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 had triumphed.

In Delhi, Mrs Gandhi received the news of Mujib's assassination when she was preparing to leave for the Red Fort to address the Independence Day rally. She was stunned.

She had warned Mujib that there was a threat to his life, but he had laughed it off saying: "They are like my children."

A radio official was sleeping soundly. A telephone call woke him up, but he felt too lazy to take the call. His wife said, "You are wanted urgently at the Radio Station." "Come immediately," he was told peremptorily. He wondered what had happened. It was still not time for the first transmission, but as a matter of habit he switched on the radio. Oh, God! Terrible, terrible.

When he reached the Radio Station, he found Major Shariyar in charge of the Radio Station. A sten gun was on the table in front of him. An official remarked ingratiatingly, "Everyone is working." "All will work as long as this gun is here," Shariyar replied haughtily, touching the gun for emphasis.

The same arrogance as the Pakistani army officers had shown when Martial Law was imposed in Pakistan on 7 October, 1958.

When a colonel was getting ready to go to office, he received a telephone call from a colleague. "Have you heard the news on the radio?" the colleague asked. He answered he had not. "Then do," he was told.

An American news agency reported Mujib's assassination within minutes of the coup. It said that Bangladesh had become an Islamic Republic. A complete reversal? Radio Pakistan too said, quoting an anonymous diplomatic source, Bangladesh was now an Islamic Republic.

There was no immediate confirmation or denial of the news. It was immaterial, when Moshtaque had come to power through a conspiracy. Bangladesh Betar had already become Radio Bangladesh.

Hasina and Rehana, Mujib's daughters, were in Brussels from 11 August to 14 August. Rehana wanted to cut short her holiday and return home. She told her sister on 12 August, "I have been having terrible dreams. I see people again on the run. I am frightened. I want to get back home." However, on the evening of 14 August, Hasina and Rehana were in a happy mood.

It was late by the time they got back from a party. They were leaving for France in the morning, yet they kept chatting with ambassador Sanaul Huq's daughters. A superstitious dread suddenly seized Hasina. "We have been laughing so much. I wonder whether we are going to cry next," she said.

There was a call for Dr Wajed Miah, Hasina's husband, in the morning from Bonn. He asked his wife to take the call. No, the caller would speak only to Wajed. Something terrible has happened, Wajed thought.

"Return to Bonn at once," the caller told Wajed.

When Hasina was told that there had been a coup in Bangladesh, her first reaction was: "None is left."

Senior officers of the armed forces debated at the GHQ how they should deal with the majors who had not only staged a coup but brazenly announced that the armed forces had taken over. They might ignore the political aspect of the coup, but there was the question of discipline. Some of the majors had been cashiered from the army, but some were still in service. If they were allowed to get away with it, there would be no chain of command. Where would the senior officers then stand?

One or two officers urged immediate action against the majors. But others dithered; they were in favour of waiting till the picture became clearer. Why take risks as long as their jobs were secure?

Major-General Shafiullah was the chief of the Army Staff, but he was a man without any initiative, and his authority had always been challenged by his deputy Major-General Ziaur Rahman.

While the staff officers were still debating what stand they should take vis-a-vis the majors, Dalim drove up in a jeep to the Dacca Cantonment and asked them to make up their minds soon. The conspirators were in command.

It was around 10 am by then; four hours had been lost. If the staff officers had wanted to take any action, they would have moved long ago. All the service chiefs pledged their support to the new regime.

An officer of the Second Artillery Regiment had telephoned Col. Taher early in the morning to tell him that Major Rashid wanted him at the Bangladesh Betar (Radio Station). The artillery officer also informed Taher that Sheikh Mujib had been killed.

The news that Sheikh Mujib had been killed and Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed had taken over power shocked Taher. "I thought," he says,

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"it would create political instability, and that in this situation we could even lose our independence."

Taher adds: "At 11.30 I left Bangladesh Betar with a feeling of deep concern. I sensed that some outside power was involved in the killing of the father of the nation" What he sensed then would become a conviction two days later.

Moshtaque and Taheruddin Thakur drove from the Radio Station to the Baitul Mukarram mosque. There was a tank in front of the car and two armoured cars brought up the rear. Moshtaque's eyes were closed as if he were deep in contemplation, Taheruddin was looking quizzically sideways at Moshtaque.

As Moshtaque's car was passing the National Press Club some journalists rushed out to wave at him. "Have you no sense of honour?" a poet burst out. "You were hailing Sheikh Mujib even yesterday."

No one answered him.

A journalist who had played a collaborationist role during the liberation struggle, felicitated Moshtaque on his success. "I was waiting for the radio announcement with fear. Thank God the coup succeeded. Otherwise they would have come looking for me," he said.

There were quite a few who were gleeful, but thousands had a feeling of personal bereavement.

Within hours of his assuming power, Moshtaque made Mohammadullah the Vice-President. There were two former Presidents in Mujib's last ministry—Abu Sayeed Chowdhury and Mohammadullah, Moshtaque accommodated both of them. Abu Sayeed Chowdhury replaced Kamal Hossain as foreign minister.

Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed Mansoor Ali, Kamruzamman and Moshtaque had formed the provisional Bangladesh government in 1971. Moshtaque, who had tried to reach an agreement with the Pakistan government behind the backs of his colleagues, was almost isolated at the time of liberation. Now he had come out on top through a conspiracy.

Tajuddin had resigned from the cabinet in October 1974. He had no position in either the party or the government. As wartime Prime Minister he had been very spirited, but he was now a broken man.

When soldiers went to Tajuddin's house, he said, "You have killed my leader, kill me." His fears had come true, and his arch enemy was now in power. Under different circumstances he might have put up a fight, but what could he possibly do now?

With the death of Mujib, Syed Nazrul Islam was under the Constitution, the Acting President. But he was not a man for bold decisions. A friend urged Nazrul Islam to act, but he was too jittery even to think ahead.

A. H. M. Kamruzamman was a fine but ease-loving man. It was difficult even to imagine him as a resistance leader.

M. Mansoor Ali, who was Prime Minister in the Mujib government, did not think that anyone would heed his orders, but he wouldn't surrender. He went into hiding, but soldiers found him in Kalabagan, not far from his residence, two days later.

Dr Kamal Hossain learned of the coup in Bangladesh when he was proceeding to Dacca from Belgrade. Hamida, his wife, had returned recently to Dacca, but it would be dangerous for him to go to Dacca.

He stopped over at Bonn.

He was going back to England.

A few ministers in the Mujib cabinet were already in league with Moshtaque or only too willing to join hands with him. But others had to be taken by soldiers to Bango Bhaban for the swearing-in ceremony in the afternoon.

Phani Majumdar, a heart patient, was in PG Hospital. When soldiers went to the hospital to take him to Bango Bhaban (President's House), Kavi Jasimuddin, a fellow patient, held him tightly and wouldn't let him go. "He is a good man. Don't take him away," Jasimuddin pleaded.

Lt Col. Farooq Rahman with his wife

A 16-member ministry consisting of ten cabinet ministers and six state ministers was sworn in at Bango Bhaban by acting Chief Justice A. E. Mohammad Hussain in the afternoon.

Two of the ten cabinet ministers were Phani Majumdar and Manoranjan Dhar, Moshtaque needed them. He was trying hard to create an impression that nothing had changed except that he had replaced Mujib as the President.

Taheruddin Thakur was so natty that some women called him *dullah miah* (bridegroom). He was now the best man to Moshtaque.

He was only a state minister, but there could be no doubt that he was one of the key men in the new regime.

Apprehensive about how India would react to the bloody events in Bangladesh, the new regime made overtures to India. Taheruddin Thakur stressed at his first press briefing that they were already in touch with India, but he did not mention Pakistan. The American ambassador's name slipped his mind."The American ambassador—what is his name?" he asked. "Boster," a journalist prompted. "Boster," Thakur echoed. "Boster, Eugene Boster," the journalist said.

Brigadier Khaled Mosharaff telephoned Col. Farook asking him to release Col. Jamil's body for burial. Farook agreed to do so on condition that Jamil was buried in the Dacca Cantonment.

Mujib's wife, three sons and two daughters-in-law were quietly buried in their blood-soaked clothes in the Banani graveyard of Dacca. There were no religious rites for them, and their graves were unmarked.

A grave was dug for Mujib too in Banani, but the conspirators decided that it was dangerous to bury Mujib in Dacca.

In his first address to the nation Moshtaque hailed the assassins as 'children of the sun' and heroes with 'fearless hearts.' But even in the hour of triumph he was pusillanimous. He tried to make out that he 'had to accept the responsibility of the government' as the head of state 'in view of a historical necessity.' He said, "In our efforts to gain independence many in the friendly country had to lay down their lives." He did not name India, the friendly country. He spoke of 'the independence achieved at the cost of the sacred blood of three million martyrs and the honour of two lakh mothers and sisters.' Yet Moshtaque concluded his address with "Bangladesh Zindabad." *Joi Bangla*—the cry of defiance, the cry of victory was not for him and his fellow conspirators. They were mortally afraid of the slogan with which thousands had died for the liberation of Bangladesh.

Bhutto's public reaction to the bloody events in Bangladesh was correct, even if it was without feeling. "I grieve," he said, "that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and members of his family have met a tragic end." However, on 15 August itself Bhutto not only announced Pakistan's recognition of the new Bangladesh regime but made a personal appeal to the Third World, specially Muslim states, to recognize it. "This appeal," he said "stems from our anguished awareness that our country was dismembered by an international conspiracy culminating in aggression."

On the day of the Dacca massacre, Bhutto also announced a gift to the people of Bangladesh. He said: "As a spontaneous gesture to the fraternal people of Bangladesh we have decided to despatch immediately to Bangladesh as a gift from the people of Pakistan 50,000 tons of rice, ten million yards of yarn cloth and five million yards of fine cloth." He promised "a greater contribution within our capacity" in the future.

Gifts for killing Mujib?

A major and a lieutenant with some soldiers descended on Tungipara in a helicopter on the morning of August 16, the day after the killings. They called the 'peshimam' (the man who leads prayers) of the village mosque and asked him if the villagers would bury Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Yes, if his body was handed over to them.

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The Government

Commerce gets no cooperation

The commerce ministry is going all out to boost exports to reach the target of Rs 8,400 crores. It has already announced a new scheme under which wholly export-oriented units will be granted wide-ranging concessions. But the commerce ministry's efforts may be nullified by delays in other ministries. The industry ministry took over six months to issue a notification allowing export production to be treated outside the licensed capacity of industrial units and minor variations in the export product for which capacity has been licensed. The finance ministry is yet to issue a notification permitting exporters to import technology on liberal terms for exports and higher royalty payment on export sales over domestic sales. Both these decisions have been taken months back by the cabinet committee for exports headed by the Prime Minister. What may affect exports further is the withdrawal from 1 April of some of the provisions of section 358 of the Income Tax Act under which concessions were granted to boost exports. Exporters were reportedly misusing these facilities.

Exports raise home cotton prices

The country is faced with a cotton shortage, yet the commerce ministry has allowed six lakh bales to be exported this season. This is one of the main reasons behind the rise in cotton prices since November. Against a demand of over 80 lakh bales, the cotton crop for this season has been estimated by the Cotton Advisory Board at 78.8 lakhs. The international cotton supply position is also very tight so that there is little likelihood of meeting the domestic shortfall with imports. Textile mills are covering their fibre deficit by importing other fibres allowed under the current multi-fibre policy of the government which has placed several fibres under the open general licence. The upshot of all this has been a further rise in fabric prices. This last price spurt at least could have been avoided if cotton exports had been disallowed this season.

Six years' futile labour

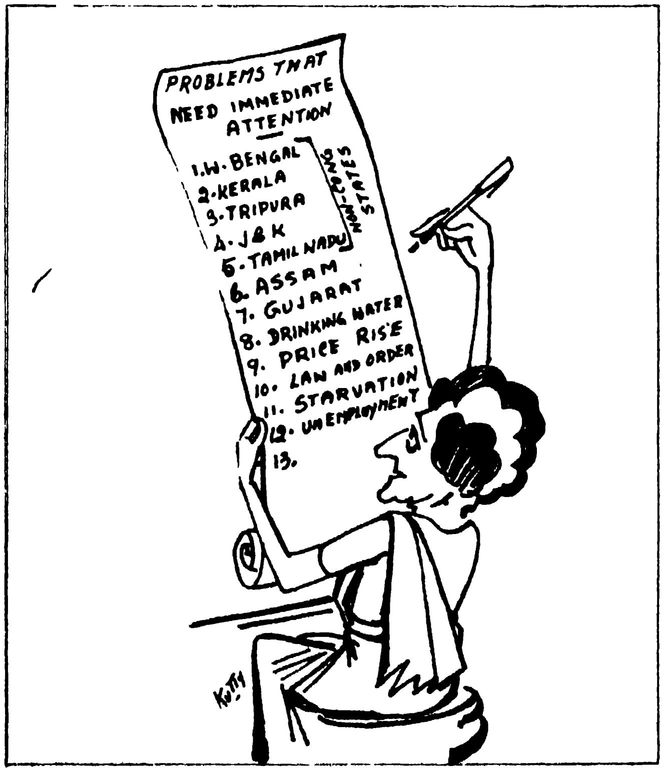
A committee headed by the director (sugar) in the union food and agriculture ministry has taken six years to submit its report on the causes of capacity under-utilisation in the sugar industry and ways to overcome it. But even after six years of labour the committee has failed to come up with something original, its recommendations mostly repeat the known views of the food and agriculture ministry like narrowing down the difference in excise duty between crystal and *khandsari* sugar and not allowing *khandsari* units to be set up in areas reserved for sugar factories. But even here the report is backdated as recent policy changes announced by the ministry have not been incorporated in it.

NALCO off to flying start

The National Aluminium Company (NALCO), set up to manage the affairs of the first ever giant alumina-cum-aluminium complex in Orissa, has several firsts to its credit. It has recently been able to tie up a deal for the sale of 150,000 tonnes of alumina in the first five years of its production life. Considering that the foundation stone of the complex was laid by the Prime Minister only in March and the plant is likely to be commissioned in 1983-84, it is quite creditable for NALCO to have already started selling its future product. And the credit for most of this goes to Mr R. Ganapathi, additional secretary in the department of mines. He should have been the most obvious choice for NALCO's chairmanship but continues to remain just director.

Goodbye to soft loans

The "soft loan scheme" of the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) and the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) has become a misnomer. There is nothing cheap about loans under this scheme after the last interest rate hike to 12-14 per cent which took effect on 2 March 1981. The scheme began in 1978 with loans being made available to five specified industries—sugar, cement, textiles, jute and engineering—at the rate of 8.5 per cent. Although commercial bank finance is still about two per cent costlier, the recent interest rate hike may defeat the basic purpose for which the scheme was started:to bring about modernisation and expansion in key industries where current returns did not enable units to meet the market cost of funds needed to expand output.



Old scheme in new garb

The industry ministry issued a press note in May which sought to announce a major policy liberalisation. It was made out that industrial units seeking to modernise or rehabilitate themselves will receive loans from public financial institutions without the stipulation of the convertibility clause under which the financial institutions reserve the right to convert loans into equity. But there is really nothing new in this. The new modernisation scheme is just an extension of the existing soft loan scheme for modernisation of five industries—cement, jute, engineering, sugar and textiles. When the soft loan scheme was launched in 1978 there was no convertibility clause and the new scheme, has none either.

Benazir Bhutto

Johar's Bhutto

By Olga Tellis

Nusrat Bhutto

One can depend on the veteran actor-producer-comedian I. S. Johar to take the untrodden path. In fact when the last Pakistani President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was executed in 1979 and Johar announced that he would make a film, everyone said, "Oh, he's just out for publicity." But Johar set to work immediately. He went to London and Europe and met innumerable friends and associates of Bhutto. Naturally he could not go to Pakistan. The material he came up with has now been tailored dramatically into an 8-page script (still tentative), that shows, as Mr Johar describes it, "The clash of two powerful Asiatic personalities."

The scene in this rough script opens with Bhutto speaking at a massive public meeting. He raises three issues and answers them himself. One: "The opposition says that I have rigged the election. Can you believe this? I challenge them all to come out jointly on this platform and command even one-third of the audience that is here."

Second: I am accused of being un-Islamic. Can anything be further from the truth? I had several generals superseded and brought Zia to the top. He is a most devout Muslim and prays five times a day even in the midst of a battle." The third question: "They accuse me of being a drunkard. Yes I may have taken a drink or two but I am certainly not like Yahya Khan."

After the public meeting there is furore among the military guards. As he goes home, he talks to the guards, enquires about their families and they swear their loyalty to him. Then in the night when the army comes to arrest him, the very same guards go over to the other side, says Johar philosophically.

Meanwhile there is a short scene following his return home. His wife pours him a drink. He is about to take a gulp when the phone rings. It is a young man on the phone asking for daughter, Benazir. Bhutto calls for Benazir and like a typical father says she should not be getting calls from young men. Benazir shouts back, "if you are so orthodox why did you send me to study at Oxford?"

Bhutto addressing a public meeting

"You see Bhutto was a personality full of contradictions", says Johar, who is fascinated by all the facts that he has studiously collected about the last 18 months or so before Bhutto's final execution. Johar feels, like many of Bhutto's friends that Bhutto literally terrorised Zia into getting rid of him. When he was in prison, he would tell every visitor who came to see him to go and tell Zia that he (Bhutto) would hang him one day. In fact he would refuse to discuss anything else with people.

On one occasion Zia went to Murree to see Bhutto who was then under house arrest. The place was plush and lavishly furnished. In the rear of the house was a well-kept lawn where Bhutto would hold meetings with his partymen. There were usually two chairs there, one for Bhutto and one for a visitor. On this particular day when it was announced that Zia was about to be ushered in, Bhutto asked for the chair to be removed. Zia entered and Bhutto seated on one chair, started to make small-talk with Zia who had perforce to stand. After a while a secretary of Bhutto, noticing that Zia was standing brought a chair for him. When Zia left, Bhutto furiously berated the secretary for bringing the chair and this reached Zia's ears.

Johar gathered that in the first three months Zia had no intention of hanging Bhutto. It was only after the repeated messages that he would be hanged, and when Bhutto's case was finally decided, that the General of Pakistan decided that Bhutto should be hanged. People say Johar did approach Zia to pardon Bhutto, but he refused pointblank.

A still from I.S. Johar's Five Rifles: *this scene was censored.*

While Johar is on the lookout for someone to play the role of Bhutto ("Certainly no Indian actor because this is for Western TV"), he himself will play the role as the superintendent of the jail. "It is a very interesting role" says Johar. "For instance, Bhutto's preference was for coffee and the jail manuals only provide tea, so the superintendent would go to Zia to ask whether Bhutto could be given coffee. Then again, Bhutto liked his clothes to be sent to a laundry of his choosing and not the jail laundry and this too was not provided for in this jail manuals. So the superintendent went to Zia for permission. This sort of thing went on for some time..One day Zia got annoyed and asked him why he came to him for such trivial matters. The superintendent then told him that none of the superiors wanted to get involved and take decisions concerning Bhutto. In fact Bhutto's taste for good clothes never waned even in jail. He had five to six suitcases of clothes and changed twice a day," says Johar.

Bhutto himself never thought he would be hanged, says Johar. And one incident proves this. While in jail Bhutto's co-prisoners and jail staff gave him several applications about their problems and to solve them on his release. He kept them duly filed with relevant notifications in the margin.

Johar kept working quietly on his script when suddenly he got a call on 12 April from a person who preferred to remain anonymous. He asked Johar if he was still interested in making the Bhutto film and said he represented the Bhutto family. Johar, of course, told him that he was in fact working on the film. The next time the anonymous caller told Johar that he would like to bring an important visitor to see him in this connection. As Johar put it, "I thought it might be one of Bhutto's companions. I was really surprised to see Murtuza, one of Bhutto's two sons. I was taken aback." "He does not look anything like his father. He's tall, smartly turned out and oozes political involvement." He talked very radically, possibly because of his connections with Gadaffi. There was no talk of Bhutto's wife or daughter. One learns not to ask certain questions, says Johar, "When I asked him Murtuza spoke about Benazir or her mother. It was politics and his father and nothing else. Murtuza was sure that Zia regime would soon fall and Bhutto's party would be back in power."

Gen. Zia

The only new thing that Johar admits he learnt from Murtuza was about the three attempts made to rescue an imprisoned Bhutto. The first one was when they tried unsuccessfully to hijack a van that was bringing Bhutto from court to jail. The second time the rescuers actually reached Bhutto's cell but were caught. Some were imprisoned for life and some were executed. In fact six of them were among the prisoners whose relatives were asked for after the recent hijack of a Pakistan International Airline Boeing. In the third attempt rescuers went disguised as army officers with the relevant "forged" release papers for Bhutto. But Bhutto refused to be released in such a manner.

Johar has not started shooting yet. He feels he will find some one to play Bhutto from among the stage stars. He has already found a minor actor to play Zia. The only thing that worries him is the possible attitude of the Indian government. If they are not favourably inclined to the film, says Johar "then I will make it in Afghanistan." ■

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KHAAS BAAT

When *Rakhee* left the films to get married to *Gulzar*, she cancelled a film she was going to make opposite *Dilip Kumar*. The producer of the film, apparently, begged Rakhee's mother to persuade the star to reconsider her decision, but Rakhee was firm. Rakhee's return to the films is history. Today she commands an enviable position and has starred in not just one but two films opposite Dilip Kumar, under the biggest banners: *Chopra* and *Mushir-Riaz* productions.

Rift between the brothers, *B. R. Chopra* and *Yash Chopra*, had begun over some family matters It worsened when the Chopra brothers began making films independently. *Pati, Patni aur Woh* was followed by *Insaaf ka Tarazu* and both the films turned out to be great successes.
And then, for unknown reasons the two families came together. Soon after, ventures of Yash and *Ravi* (B. R Chopra's son) flopped. Of course, now that the two families have come together—they have gone to the extent of getting themselves photographed in a huge group, in the typical Hindi film way—the bitterness of failure would be eased.

Manoj Kumar's son is dying to make his debut in films. Well, if *Rajendra Kumar* could launch his son's career with *Love Story*, which incidentally was quite a success, why not Manoj? In fact, Papa Manoj has worked out his own plans for launching *Kunal Goswami*'s career. But there are problems. Not only does he have a namesake in *Shashi Kapoor*'s son, but he has to face some very stiff competition from the sons of other filmstars. Add to that the fact that he looks very much like his father, who was not particularly famous for his sex-appeal. So, Manoj will have to work real hard to get his son's career settled.

What is *Asrani*'s wife *Manju* up to these days? For a while a lot was heard about her wanting to make it big in the industry. Her prime ambition at that time was to replace *Bindu*. Bindu, of course, has been replaced, not by Manju, but by other heroines on the lookout for vampish roles. Apparently, Manju has not given up hope. The grapevine has it that the last time she was seen in one of the northern cities, she was actually on a shooting stint. Looks like the Asranis are resigned to the fact that Mr Asrani's films will be unsuccessful and have decided to launch the career of the wife instead.

You've heard of *chamchas* hovering around heroes and trying to partake of a share of their success. But there is one instance of a female *chamcha*—a *chamchi*—who has been flitting around a once-upon-a-time famous hero. I am speaking about *Shammi*, the comedienne, who moves around everywhere hero *Rajesh Khanna* goes—parties, shooting. You name it; she's there. Now that she has left her husband, *Sultan Ahmed*, she has this fervent desire to make a film. Of course, we have been hearing about this film for many years. And who better to ask for help than Mr Khanna? More, Shammi is *Anju Mahendroo*'s close friend (remember Anju was Rajesh's ex-girlfriend) and hardly a day passes when Shammi is not seen in the Mahendroo house. Rajesh is also her ex-hubby Sultan's good friend for whom he is making a film.

Deven Verma, the comedian-producer is that rare person in the industry who does not make a big fuss about the films he is making. He tells people not to see his films nor does he see them himself. He has not lost his cool although he has lost a few cool millions making films. Nor does he go on falling at the feet of his friends or stars, either as an actor or as a producer.

Bindu.replaced!

PRABHAT KUMAR

Rakhee:still on top

JAYANT DAS

DURGAPRASAD

Dilip Kumar

KHAAS BAAT

While *Rati Agnihotri* is busy making a career in Bombay, this girl from Punjab, *Manjari*, popularly known as *Swapna*, is making inroads in the film industry in the south. She has already starred in two Telugu films, both of which have been well received. The star is scheduled to work in two Tamil films opposite *Kamalahasan*, one of them intriguingly titled, *Tick Tick Tick*. Swapna has also been chosen for a Malayalam film in which she is paired off with *Shah Nawaz*, the son of *Prem Nazir*, the legendary Malayalam hero. Shooting for this film is to begin shortly in the United States

What is *Feroze Khan* doing in Bangalore? Finalising the script for his next blockbuster, of course. However, the grapevine has it that Feroze is looking around for a couple of Karnataka girls who can star in his movies. And Feroze is looking real hard. In the recent party thrown by CM Gundu Rao, Feroze—one of the few outsiders—was invited. He was seen spending a long time chatting with *Jayamala*. Not surprisingly, the star was offered a guest role in a big budget Hindi film. But Jayamala declined the offer. And that, is surprising!

"I don't mind selling my body, since I've to feed my child," said *Sumalatha* in a recent Tamil film. Unfortunately, the film ran into rough weather at the censors, although the producer—a resourceful person—ultimately managed to get the film screened. But in vain. The film flopped, inspite of all the raw dialogue from Sumalatha. And that is a personal tragedy. The star had high hopes about *Kazhagu* in which she played second lead opposite *Rajnikant*. But the film despite its fantastic opening, failed to send the sparks flying.

PIOUSJI

Sripriya.
no more exposure

Narayana Rao

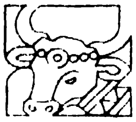
Seema

"I can't stand men who can think only between their legs," says *Jayamala*, the popular Kannada actress. The star walked out of the sets of a Telugu film recently, all because the producer she was working for "gets passionate whenever he sees a pretty actress." Jayamala is not a prude, but the behaviour of the producer was odious enough to induce her to give up the assignment and the rather attractive remuneration.

Sripriya has not lost her love for sexy dances, and yet a change seems to have come about. Like *Seema* who became respectable, almost to the point of being conservative, after her wedding, Sripriya too is trying hard to acquire a new reputation as far as exposing herself is concerned. She has said 'no' to all her producers, including her favourite *K. Balajee*, in whose *Sawal (Hath ki Safai*, in Hindi) the actress had starred opposite *Kamalahasan*.

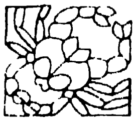
Beginning 21 June

ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a week of mixed fortunes for you Be on your guard against treachery and deception. Do not get into arguments with your superiors or elders and avoid quarrels. You are advised to curb all erratic tendencies If you proceed carefully, you might be rewarded with a fair share of luck You are likely to encounter serious competition and even opposition on the business and professional front Do not be discouraged **Good dates:** 22 and 24 **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9 **Favourable directions:** West and North



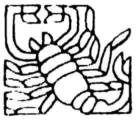
TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is a good week for you Your fortunes will take a better turn this week The monotony and boredom of the last few months will come to an end and things are likely to brighten up considerably You will prosper For those in service, promotions are likely to come about Business and property matters will require special attention and care But do not take hasty decisions The time is unusually favourable for romance **Good dates:** 21, 23 and 25 **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North-west

GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is a week of changes for you The steady pattern of life that you had been leading for the past few months is likely to be broken by a sudden reversal of fortune Beware of friends and new acquaintances There might be attempts by your friends to deceive you. Do not postpone correspondence that has been lying overdue Devote yourself wholeheartedly to your intellectual pursuits Keep an eye on your health **Good dates:** 22, 24 and 26 **Lucky numbers:** 5, 7 and 9 **Favourable direction** East



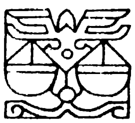
CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is a favourable week for you Let your intuition be your guide Your interests will be served Professionally, this is going to be a good week for you You might expect a promotion For those in business, the financial front will not experience any plunge The time is favourable for those who are romantically inclined. Your love affairs will bloom unexpectedly For those yet to find a suitable partner, this is the time **Good dates** 23 25 and 26 **Lucky numbers:** 1, 5 and 9 **Favourable direction:** South-east

LEO (15 August—14 September) This week is not going to be as favourable as the previous one. It will be less eventful among other things. There might be a small financial loss or an associate might be the cause of some annoyance But do not let these things worry you Be cautious about relationships with friends of the opposite sex The time is not favourable for romances You might expect some trouble on the romantic front **Good dates:** 23, 26 and 27 **Lucky numbers:** 3, 8 and 9 **Favourable direction:** North

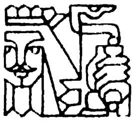


VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is going to be a week of changes Those in services will see some beneficial changes A promotion is not ruled out completely However, you are advised to curb your extravagant tendencies. This is not the right time to squander your earnings But you are advised not to take any decisions unilaterally Seek the advise of your elders and superiors regarding property matters A secret friendship or association will prove helpful **Good dates:** 21, 23 and 25 **Lucky numbers** 2, 4 and 7 **Favourable direction:** West

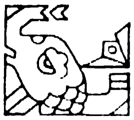
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Slow but steady progress is in store for you this week. You will be able to overcome your difficulties this week For this, you will have to work extremely hard. The time is good for taking up property matters, and matters relating to insurance policies Celebrations are in the offing by the end of the week You are advised to exercise tact in your dealings with elders The health of young members of your family may cause you **Good dates:** 22, 25 and 27 **Lucky numbers.** 1, 7 and 9 **Favourable direction:** East



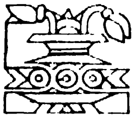
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A fair measure of success is on your way provided you stick to the golden rule of neither borrowing nor lending The first half of the week may bring you financial gains A secret contact will do you a good turn You are advised to avoid unnecessary disputes An elderly member of your family might need some very cautious handling. Keep an eye on your health. A new friendship may turn out to be particularly beneficial **Good dates:** 23, 26 and 27 **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 6. **Favourable direction:** South



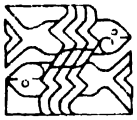
SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) You will make steady progress this week. Your stars portent some financial losses. You are thus advised not to make investments hastily It would be better if you refrained from investing at all this week This is also not the right time for speculations and gambling A new friendship is in the offing The homefront is likely to be peaceful and the end of the week might even bring you some surprises **Good dates:** 21, 22 and 27 **Lucky numbers:** 2, 3 and 4. **Favourable direction** East



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This week is fairly uneventful for you You are advised to clear all your pending debts Your efforts to make a deal may not be crowned with success Your peronal life is likely to be relatively eventful An elderly person is likely to cause you some trouble Unless you exercise tact your troubles might turn into acute anxiety There are chances of misunderstanding with your spouse The time is favourable for romance **Good dates:** 21, 25 and 27. **Lucky numbers** 1, 3 and 7 **Favourable direction:** South



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is a fairly good week for you You are going to gain through a friend in your business For those in the services a friend will do you a good turn. You are advised to change your outlook, so far as financial conditions are concerned Do not on any account undertake risky ventures. Your personal life will be somewhat eventful this week Relationships on the domestic front will strained Be careful in your dealings with the opposite sex. **Good dates:** 22, 24 and 25. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This is a favourable week for you A sudden change in fortunes is going to restore your confidence in yourself. Beware of over optimism. There are chances that you might get involved in a love affair. Precaution and patience are absolutely necessary in such matters You are advised to exercise tact and tolerance so far as dealings with elders are concerned Guard against the loss of a very close friend. **Good dates:** 26 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 8. **Fabourable direction:** South-west

AMRITLAL

is india

prize rs. 30 for the entry given first

KHANDWA: Bride and bridegroom of marriage parties will be treated as VIPs (very important persons) while travelling by the buses of the Madhya Pradesh State Transport Corporation, according to a circular issued by the MPSRTC general manager Mr R. K. Khanna All divisional depots of the MPSRTC have been directed that the bridegroom and bride should be given priority in booking of tickets and must also be allowed to occupy front seat usually reserved for VIPs. This special facility has come into effect today (19 May)—*M P. Chronicle* (Veekay Mandloi, Bhopal)

PUNE Mrs Krish Sahi, chairman of the joint parliamentary committee to examine the Dowry Prohibition Act, revealed an interesting case of misuse of cash incentives for inter-caste marriages A brahmin married a harijan girl to claim the statutory incentive, which was granted. He reappeared after two years to make a claim for a second incentive for another inter-caste marriage It transpired later that the brahmin divorced the girl soon after the first wedding, and married her again after the expiry of the required two-year period of separation. It was quite legal, and the law could do very little, she said—*Times of India* (Rashbehari Das, Calcutta)

NEW DELHI A large group of Delhi University *karmacharis* adopted a novel way of protest by holding a *kirtan* in protest against the university authorities. The *kirtan* which began last evening (2 June) continued through the night The *karmacharis* sang hymns in praise of God and prayed that "good sense might prevail on the university authorities " They want the resignation of the registrar who they allege has been victimising them. The *karmacharis* wanted to hold the *kirtan* in front of the registrar's office but when they were not allowed to do so they went and squatted outside the gates of the administrative block. An altercation resulted when a group of the *karmacharis* supporting the registrar tried to stop the *kirtan*. However, the arrival of the police averted a possible clash—*Times of India* (Pradip Kumar [illegible]tta, Calcutta)

BHOPAL: The current wedding season seems to have affected normal postal services in some parts of Madhya Pradesh. According to reports from Indore, three lakh letters have piled up there, unsorted and undelivered. Half the staff is stated to be on leave in connection with the marriage of relatives or for other purposes. The result is the pile of undelivered letters, it is stated—*Times of India* (Md. Aftab Hussain, Gaya)

ANDHRA PRADESH: Andhra Pradesh labour minister Venkataswami and Mr R. Manohar, a state MLC, nearly came to blows on Wednesday (27 May) at the chief minister's 'cottage' in New Delhi in the presence of newsmen. The trouble started when Mr Venkataswami, who was sitting with chief minister T. S. Anjiah, alleged that Mr Manohar was trying to oust him through false propaganda and that the latter was being financed for the purpose by some of his close associates. Mr Manohar, who is considered to be a close associate of Mr Anjiah, challenged Mr Venkataswami to prove his charge or quit. He repeatedly shouted that he himself would quit as MLC if he could provide a 'shred of evidence.' When both of them began scuffling, Mr Anjiah led Mr Manohar out so that tempers cool down. Later Mr Anjiah explained that all this was only 'friendly' discussions. He and Mr Venkataswami left for Hyderabad in the evening. Mr Anjiah during his ten-minute meeting with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, presented her *prasadam* from Tirupati for the benefit of Mr Rajiv Gandhi—*Patriot* (S. Srinivas, New Delhi)

BHUBANESWAR: The dream of 25-year-old Kanaka Lata Beherea of Polsora village in Orissa to get a job has come true. She is understood to have been appointed as a woman constable. The girl was a rape victim. She had lodged complaints with the Ganjam police that some persons had raped her. She then submitted a petition to the inspector general of police seeking his protection. The IGP, Mr Nrusingha Swain, said the girl and her family members came to Berhampur in search of jobs. First she got a job as a home guard. While working as home guard and staying with her friend, she was allegedly raped by two persons. The police had arrested the two and launched cases against them. She then managed to get back to her village and got a temporary job in the block office. But she said in her petition that she could not live peacefully there because the head clerk "victimised" her. She urged the IGP to give her a job "to live a clean life." The IGP has ordered the superintendent of police of Ganjam to make her as a woman constable—*Hindu* (N. Raghavan, Madras)

without comment

Democracy and Mr Charan Singh are two different things—Rajiv Gandhi

He (Rajiv Gandhi) has chosen the wrong path and the wrong party—a good man gone astray—Raj Narain

Relatives of people in power get a better chance to meet people, mix with them and know their problems. They, therefore, have an advantage, as the sons of kings of yore—Farooq Abdullah, MP and president of National Conference

Those who wish to come to us should make an application in proper form. They will be admitted after due scrutiny—Vasantdada Patil, AICC(I) general secretary quoted in *Organiser*

The fate of the Muslim countries should not be drawn in Washington or Moscow. They should be decided in the Islamic capitals and by Islamic wills—Prince Saud al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister

He (Y. B. Chavan) says that being in the Congress(U) was like striking one's head against the wall. He also felt that some Congress(U) elements were not his cup of tea. I wonder if the Congress(I) will suit him—a party where nobody has the courage to defy their leader and where people have been flicked off like dead flies—Ambika Soni, Congress(U) general secretary

It is a strange paradox that while the people are disillusioned with Mrs Gandhi, the leaders (of the opposition parties) are making a beeline to join her—Atal Behari Vajpayee, BJP president quoted in *India Today*

I hope any enemy will think ten times before venturing to threaten India—General K V. Krishna Rao, on taking over as chief of army staff

It is only when they (Akalis) are out of power that they raise such bogies—Zail Singh, union home minister on the demand for Khalistan

(If there was a nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union) both capitalism and communism would be indistinguishable in the ashes of the target area—John Kenneth Galbraith

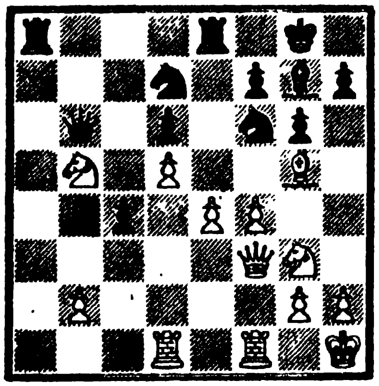
When I'm married I want to be single, and when I'm single, I want to get married—Actor Cary Grant

It is a beautiful feeling that the people know me instantly and that certain favours are just granted to me because of the fact that I am Shabana Azmi—Actress Shabana Azmi

stration/Ahi Bhusan Malik

chess

Van Vijgerden (Black)



Ligterink (White) to move
Position after Black's 19th move

Game of the month: The Modern Banana

When Tal popularised the Modern Benoni defence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he produced many dashing tactical wins with Black, but over the years familiarity has strengthened White's extra central pawn and proved that if Black fails to get his counterplay going quickly then his game will be squashed like a ripe banana. The defence is based on a sound chess philosophy, namely that, if you want to play to win with Black, it's no use trying to establish and hold some kind of equilibrium in the position. The only way is to create an imbalance in the position and then try to prove that your side of the scales is the stronger. The Modern Benoni does precisely this, giving White a central pawn majority free of charge. As compensation Black obtains a queenside majority and his job is to prove that his is the stronger. In a sense, he is challenging one of the central elements of chess theory, that the centre is more important than the flanks. I give an example in which Black's queenside play comes to a dead end and the central-phalanx ploughs through. Very typical of the dangers inherent in this defence.

White. Ligterink Black Van Vijgerden
Modern Benoni Defence.
Amsterdam 1980

1. P—Q4, N—KB3; 2. P—QB4, P—K3; 3. N—QB3, P—B4; 4. P—Q5, P x P; 5. P x P, P—Q3; 6. P—K4, P—KN3; 7. B—Q3, B—N2; 8. KN—K2. It was with precisely this set-up that Jonathan Penrose beat Tal (then world champion) some 20 years ago, thereby signalling the end of Tal's patronage of the Benoni.

8. . . ., O—O; 9. O—O, P—QN3; The queen's bishop is always Black's problem child in this opening. One of the points of White's system of development is to avoid Black trading his bishop for the knight with . . B—N5.

10. B—N5, B—R3; 11. P—B4, B x B; 12. Q x B, QN—Q2; 13. K—R1, P—QR3; 14. P—QR4, Q—B2; 15. QR—Q1, KR—K1; 16. N—N3, P—B5; 17. Q—B3, P—QN4; Getting desperate for counterplay. On the preliminary 17. . . ., QR—N1 White has the sacrificial motif well known from the Penrose-Tal game 18 P—K5, P x P, 19. P—B5! with a passed QP and strong pressure on the KB file.

18. P x P, P x P; 19. N x P, Q—N3;

DIAGRAM

The point is that if 20 N—B3, Q x P Black has some counterplay, but he does not retreat.

20. N x P!, Q x N; 21. P—K5, Q—N3; Not 21. . . ., N x P, 22. P x N, Q x P because the other knight is left underprotected.

22. P x N, N x P; 23. P—Q6, R—Q2; 24. P—B5 White has already a pawn more and now the attack begins in earnest.

24. . . ., Q—N4; 25. P x P, BP x P; 26. B—K7, N—K4; 27. Q—K2, N—B3; 28. Q—K6+, K—R1; 29. P—Q7, R—KN1; 30. N—K4, N—Q1; Allowing a quaint finish.

31. N—Q6, N x Q; 32. N—B7 mate.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

In **Problem 1** of the Christmas Competition the bidding at game all began

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1♥	dble	No
?			

South held
♠ K J 4 ♥ K J 6 3 2 ♦ 5 ♣ K 10 7 2

Competitors were asked how many points out of 5 they would award to (a) Pass, (b) 2♠, (c) 2NT (d) 3♣ (e) 3♠

It is hardly ever right to make a penalty pass with moderate trumps You may defeat One Heart but there must be a better score your way

The jump to Two Spades on a three-card suit is unusual, but not a bad expression of your values If partner raises to Three Spades you can convert to 3NT and if he carries you to game in spades you should make it

A jump to Three Clubs is also a fair reflection of your strength but not of where your strength lies A raise to Four Clubs would not be particularly welcome and you don t want partner to pass as he may do

A jump to Three Spades would suggest a different type altogether - long spades and not much else You might land on your feet, but you might end up in a silly contract with trumps 3-3

We are left with 2NT which is about right in terms of strength and does indicate where your values lie My idea of the marking is 2NT - 5 2♠ - 4 3♣ - 2 Pass and 3♠ - 1

In **Problem 2** the bidding at love all was

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
-	-	1♣	1♥
1♠	No	2♣	No
2♥	No	2♠	No
?			

South held
♠ 9 8 4 3 2 ♥ A 6 ♦ A Q J 4 ♣ 8 3

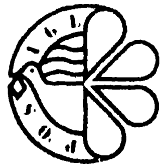
The choice was between (a) Pass (b) 2NT (c) 3♣ (d) 3♦ (e) 3♠ and (f) 4♠

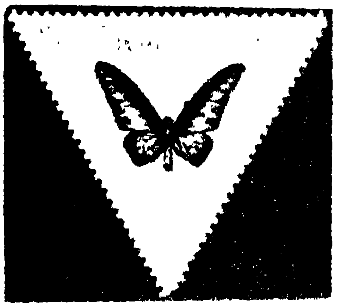
Partner has made minimum bids so what are your chances for game? At best he might hold the Ace of spades or King of diamonds and provide six tricks in clubs so there is a possibility of game in notrumps but even this will probably require a finesse and a break I think you should accept the safe part score No doubt you could make Three Clubs, but partner might regard this as forcing after the cue bid The best game chance is in notrumps certainly it would be wrong to advance in spades Three Diamonds leads nowhere

I mark the answers as follows Pass - 5 2NT 3 3♣ - 2 3♦ and 3♠ - 1, 4♠ - 0

TERENCE REESE

stamps





Often seen in cheap mixed packets are large well-designed stamps, some of them triangulars, featuring wild animals, birds, flowers and butterflies, with the inscription 'Republik Maluku Selatan' Despite their attractive appearance these stamps are bogus Issued about 30 years ago in the United States, they purported to be postage stamps from the Republic of the South Moluccas a group of islands in Indonesia which were said to be in rebellion against the newly constituted Indonesian republic The stamps were never placed on sale at post offices in the South Moluccas and are not listed in catalogues of authentic issues They were intended mainly to attract young collectors and have no value except as curiosities

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1 What is Daltonism?
2 What is gold leaf used for?
3 Where would one find Jacobson's organ?
4 What is the smallest element of a language called?
5 The brightest star in Orion is known by its English name, Rigel What is its Latin form?
6 Where would the phalanges be in a human body?

ANSWERS

1 Colour blindness of the red-green kind is known as Daltonism Colour blindness is a disorder of the retina and is an inherited trait usually found in men
2 For decorative purposes like lettering in leather-bound books Gold leaf is thin gold foil produced by beating gold ribbon
3 In a pit viper The organ assists the snake in smelling the air around it. Chemical particles are picked up from the air and passed to the organ
4 Morpheme In English, the word "talk" can be used as an example of morpheme
5 Beta Orionis
6 In the foot They are the toe bones

ASIDE

License for journalists

By V. K. Madhavan Kutty

"The interview I had agreed to give you this afternoon stands cancelled," I told the reporter over the phone.

"What happened? Have you decided to go slow with the launching of your new political party, or is it that you are thinking of joining the parent party again?" the reporter enquired.

"Nothing of that sort," I said. "Didn't you see the UNESCO proposal about licensing journalists to ensure ethics? I've decided that hereafter I shall meet journalists who are properly licensed. Journalists without proper licenses are a threat to national interest," I affirmed.

"But sir, it will take time to get the license. By then I will miss my deadline. I want your interview to appear along with the announcement of your next political affiliation," insisted the reporter.

"Why should it take time? UNESCO may take time to formulate guidelines. But we have the necessary knowhow in the matter. In fact we had a pilot scheme on this. Probably on this, we can give the knowhow even to the developed countries," I explained.

"Don't you think it will affect the freedom of the press?" asked the reporter. (He has to be doubly screened before giving the license, I thought.)

I am not bound to answer him since I have not agreed to the interview. Still I said, "What freedom? Whose freedom? It is a concept wrongly understood, followed and propagated by the media in the West. It is against developed and underdeveloped countries," I tried to educate him.

"Sir, then shall I interview you about the idea of this new licensing?" he asked me a little hesitatingly. I agreed with the same degree of hesitation.

"What will happen to the Press Information Bureau?" he asked.

"It will be converted into the Press Licensing Bureau. The Chief Press Licensing officer will not be a cadre appointment. He will be recruited from outside for which another set of criteria will be used. The Bureau will deal with pressmen accredited to the centre, while the regional licensing officers will deal with regional journalists," I said.

"How will that help to have the ethics ensured?" the reporter was impertinent.

"The code is to be framed once the implementation of the scheme begins. Each genuine journalist will be given a license. If a journalist is found engaging himself in reporting opposition jamborees the license would be withdrawn. He has to report all that is said by the authorities truthfully. The Bureau will issue notifications everyday and that should be the guideline," I elaborated.

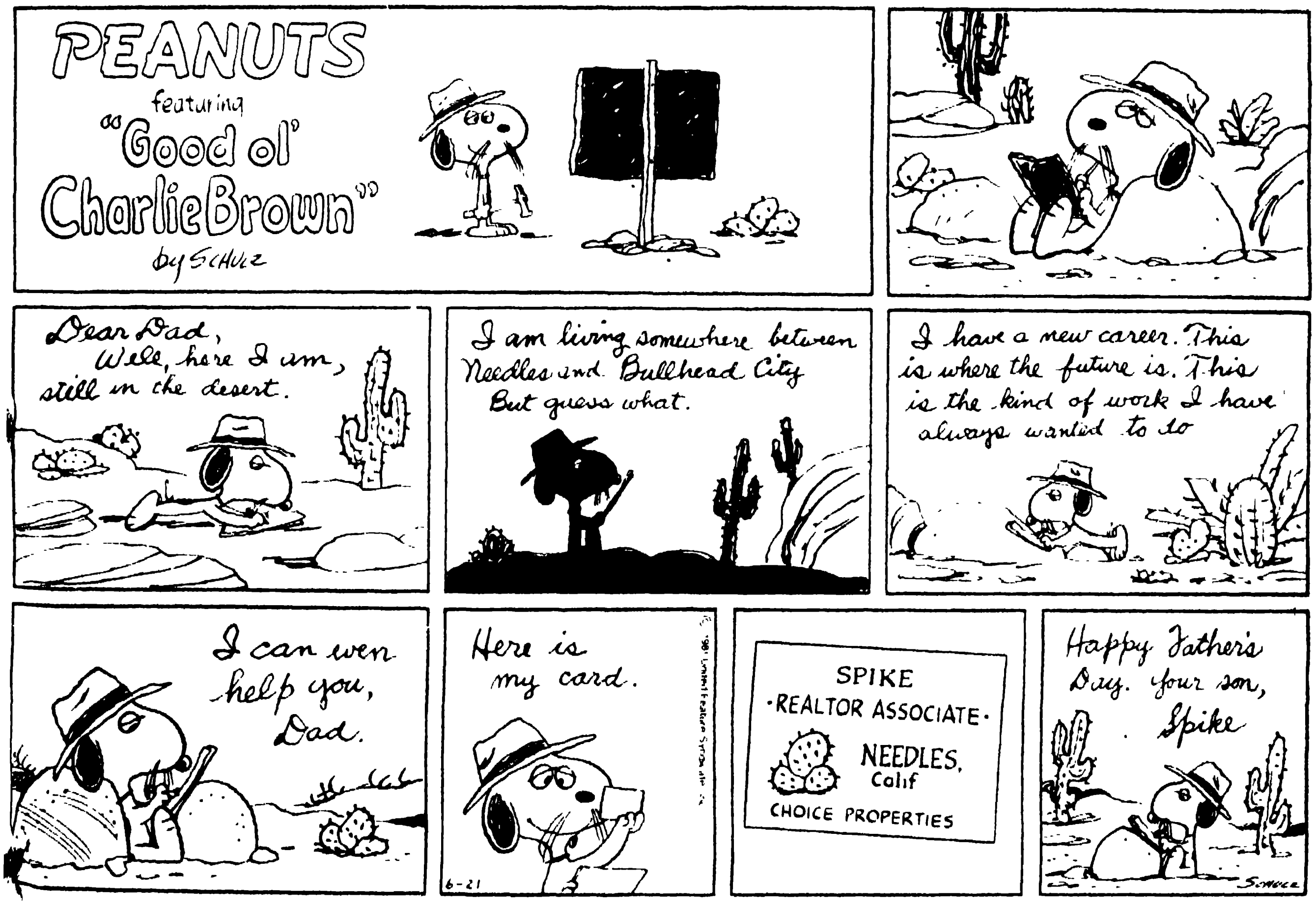
"Who decides the ethics?"

"Ethics of course will be laid down by the concerned ministry. There will be an advisory committee. At present we are thinking of nominating the chief ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka..."

"Has this 15 per cent duty on newsprint and ethics any connection?" asked the reporter. (This reporter does not have any chance to get the license. He cannot identify with any situation, I thought to myself again.)

"It is ethical to ask newspapers to sacrifice when all others are given some relief. This is to make newspapers identify themselves with the surroundings," I replied.

And that was the last interview to be given by me to an unlicensed journalist.


PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol' Charlie Brown"
by Schulz
Dear Dad, Well, here I am, still in the desert.
I am living somewhere between Needles and Bullhead City But guess what.
I have a new career. This is where the future is. This is the kind of work I have always wanted to do
I can even help you, Dad.
Here is my card.
SPIKE
•REALTOR ASSOCIATE•
NEEDLES, Calif
CHOICE PROPERTIES
Happy Father's Day. Your son, Spike
6-21
Schulz

SAD END

MR Ravi Tandon, who was our ambassador-designate to Spain at the time of his tragic death in a glider crash on 31 May, was a sad man during his last days. A month back he was recalled to New Delhi from Lusaka where as our high commissioner to Zambia he was occupying one of the prestigious posts in Africa. What was unusual was that his transfer came just before President Reddy's visit to that state, when normally an envoy with some experience is kept at his post to ensure that a visit by the head of state goes off smoothly. Sources say that the atmosphere in the Indian Foreign Service, which has a relatively clean image, has of late been vitiated by politicking by an officer entrusted with administrative duties in the Foreign Office.

LATEST "GAYA RAM"

YASHWANTRAO Balwantrao Chavan started life "back home" with a small rebuff from the Prime Minister's house on 2 June. He had sought an appointment with Mrs Gandhi after resigning from the Congress(U). Mrs Gandhi's aides, however, informed Chavan that he would be granted another audience only after 15 June. Mrs Gandhi's strategy is obvious. While the fact that Chavan is so eager to join her party certainly further dampens the opposition's already pretty damp image, she does not want defectors like Chavan to take even an iota of credit for the results of the 14 June by-elections. Mr Chavan, incidentally, was the author of the term "*Aya Ram aur Gaya Ram*." He used this phrase in a Lok Sabha speech in the late Sixties when the coalitions formed by the opposition parties were crumbling in the states. Chavan, who acquired a reputation as a fence-sitter at the time of the 1969 split, has now become more decisive, he has become a "Gaya Ram."

Y. B.Chavan

ZIA'S UNFINISHED AUTOBIOGRAPHY

WITH the death of President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh, an ambitious project of the leading Indian publishing house, Vikas, also died. When President Rahman came to New Delhi last winter in connection with CHOGRAM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting), Vikas approached him and offered to publish his biography. The Bangladesh President suggested that it could be an autobiography, which he could dictate over a period of time, and send the transcribed manuscript to Vikas. The book was to be published in both English and Bengali. Vikas's young and dynamic managing director, Narendra Kumar, went to Dacca soon after Zia returned to his country and finalised the deal. The late president did not want any royalty to be paid to him, he told Kumar that the royalty money should be used for charity. According to Vikas sources, the book was in an advanced stage of preparation at the time of Zia's death. Perhaps some loyalist of the late president may even now manage to get hold of the manuscript and pass it on to Vikas.

MAN IN CHARGE: ARUN NEHRU

ASHOKE BOSE

Arun Nehru

ARUN Nehru, the MP from Rae Barielly and a cousin of Rajiv Gandhi, is in charge of the campaign at Amethi. No Congress(I) man can dare enter Amethi without a nod from Arun Nehru: even the chief minister of UP, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, has not been spared. According to some sources Arun Nehru, who resigned his lucrative job with a paint-manufacturing Calcutta firm last year to join politics is entertaining thoughts of becoming the next chief minister of UP. If that is correct then obviously there will be tension between him and V. P. Singh. There is another irritant. Within the Rajiv *durbar*, Shivendra Bahadur Singh, MP, and Arun Nehru do not see eye to eye. Shivendra Bahadur has been openly critical of the way in which Arun Nehru is conducting the campaign. Shivendra Bahadur and V. P. Singh are related, both coming from former princely families. Though V. P. Singh has not been stopped from entering Amethi, he isn't getting any big welcomes either.

TUBELIGHT AT AMETHI

AFTER a day's hectic electioneering, Rajiv Gandhi went to the inspection bungalow at Tiloi to sleep. The tubelight in his room was flickering. One of Rajiv's overenthusiastic aides telephoned the chief minister V. P. Singh (perhaps without Rajiv's knowledge) himself and the over-anxious CM immediately telephoned the chairman of the UP State Electricity Board (UPSEB)V. C. Mittal, and asked him to look into the matter. The next morning Mittal went to Tiloi, accompanied by senior aides, and started making enquiries about possible faults in the load position. An entire day's checking and investigation ultimately solved the problem: the load and the voltage were okay, but the tubelight itself was bad! Does Rajiv Gandhi know of such goings-on around him? He had better be careful. It would make little sense blaming officials for "excesses" later.

TAILPIECE: On 16 May Andhra Pradesh chief minister T. Anjiah had summoned a meeting of all the MPs from his state, cutting across party lines. In the meeting, Congress(I)'s K. Brahmananda Reddi found himself seated next to Congress(U)'s V. B. Raju. Reddi turned to Raju and asked, "What is this fellow Chavan doing?" Raju smiled and replied, "He is only trying to prove that Brahmananda Reddi was wiser." Readers will recall that Reddi headed the Congress when Mrs Gandhi split the party in 1978, and continued to be in the "other" Congress for quite some time. He was even the industry minister in the Charan Singh cabinet. However, he was also among the first to cross over to Mrs Gandhi's fold, just before the 1980 elections.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

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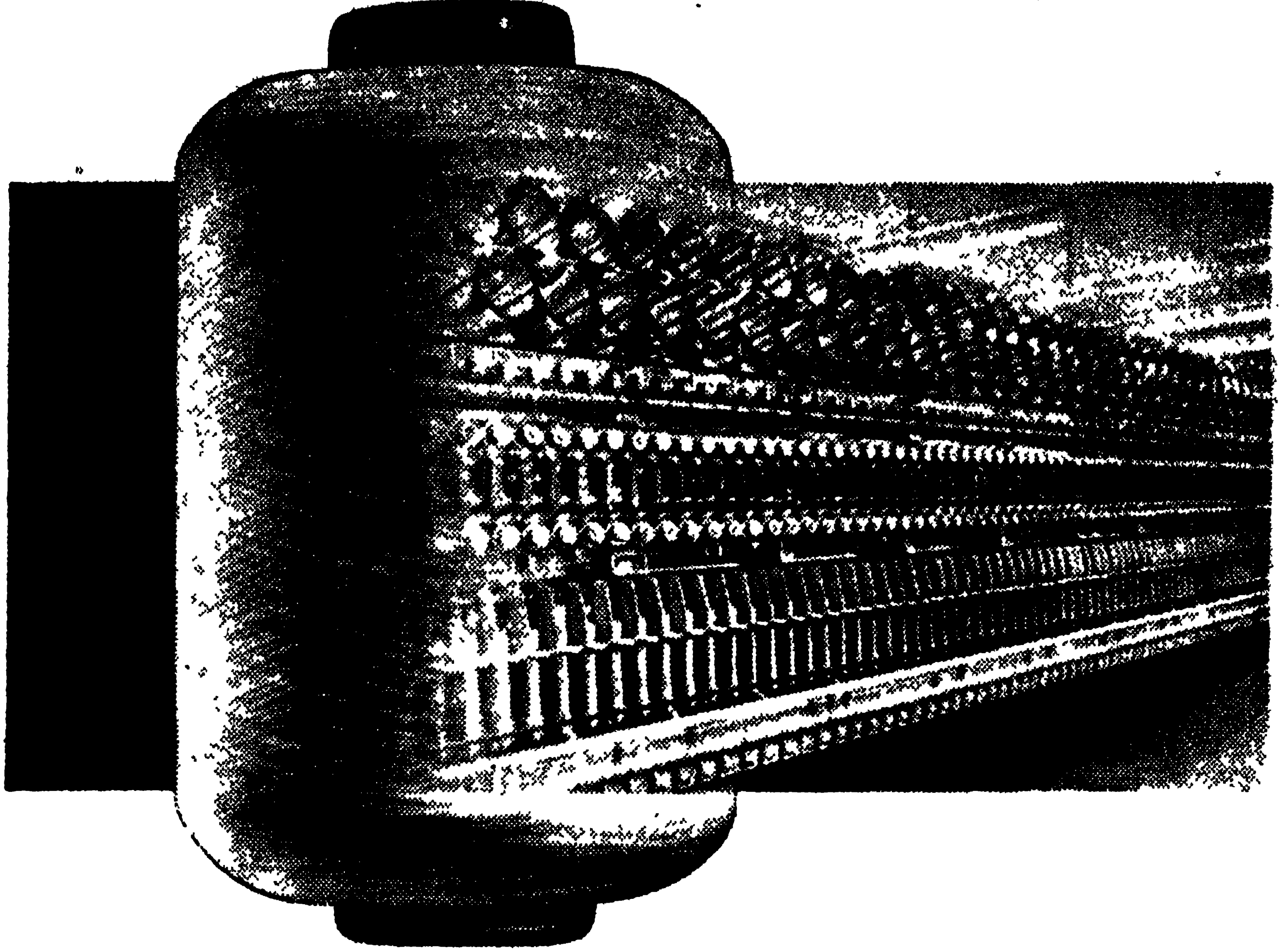

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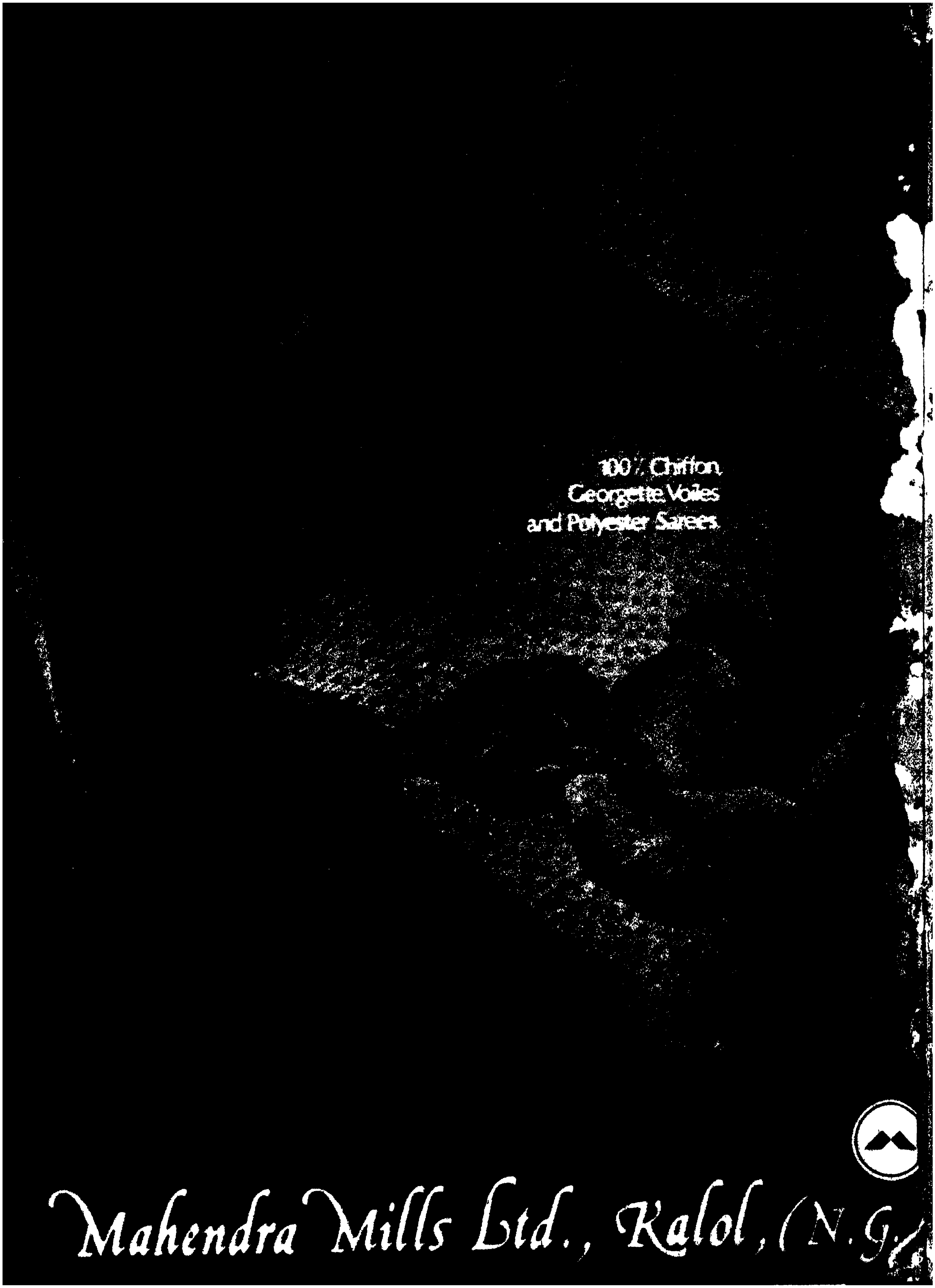

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